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MOTHER MARY OF ST. BERNARD.

MOTHER MARY OF ST. BERNARD

of the

Society of the Helpers of the Holy Souls

BY

PETER M. DUNNE, S.J.

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PREFACE

THE lives of those who have pioneered for Christ in this land we love will always be the most sacred inheritance of the children of America. This is doubly true in the lives of those who were in the vanguard in behalf of the poor, the neglected, and those who have fallen out of the ways of life.

Mother St. Bernard was one whom God chose to be a leader in a work so noble and so great that words hardly tell its greatness. To forego, in behalf of the souls who wait in expiation in Purgatory, our own merits and satisfactions is indeed an heroic work, but to turn aside from life's greatest rewards and give oneself unreservedly to serve the sick and the poor and the outcast is indeed a service that merits every praise.

Mother St. Bernard was one of the chosen few unto whom God gave a new leadership, and the publication of her life ought not only to draw many unto the high vocation that was hers, but also ought to make all who read feel the great power of God that is exerted through His handmaids in behalf of that charity which makes them condescend even to the poor and the lowly.

In sending forth this Life with my blessing I can only pray that it may be fruitful in increasing the number of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, and fruitful also in inspiring many unto the heroism which has ever marked, in this country, the work of this noble Order.

✠ EDWARD J. HANNA
Archbishop of San Francisco
January 25, 1928.

MOTHER MARY OF SAINT BERNARD

CHAPTER FIRST.

CHILDHOOD.

MARIE-ANTOINETTE DE CHERGE was born in France, in the little town of St. Hilaire, not far from Poitiers, May 10, 1850. This little French baby came into the world at a time when French politics were in a very unsettled condition; when Louis Napoleon as first president of the First Republic was beginning to lay his plans for his *coup d'état* of 1851, which would turn the First Republic into the Second Empire. Years later, further and newer political developments were going to cause Marie some anxiety.

Marie's father, Charles de Chergé, was of old stock, in whose soul the Catholic Faith, running down from the many generations of the past, was settled deep and strong. Madame de Chergé was a pious, sensitive, deeply affectionate woman and of that unspeakably tender attachment to her fam-

ily which reaches possibly its highest development in certain types of French families.

Our Lord was going to love this little baby, and very few years were to pass before He would begin to manifest this love in ways unmistakable. It can be said in truth that God looked upon this soul and loved it. Those quiet solicitations of grace, those desires of drawing closer to Christ ensouled with so much sweetness a new love, which one day begins to stir in the heart, a love of that which is Divine—all this came gently into the soul of Marie-Antoinette when she was yet but a very little girl.

We are favored with knowing a great deal of the inner history of this soul and we are happy in the knowledge. For this we have to thank her first Mother Superior who bade her, before she was very long in Religion, write out a little story of her vocation. This story we still have and it is this which tells us of the first whisperings of grace by which the Heavenly Bridegroom was attracting this soul to Himself to be His spouse forever. True, Marie expressed a desire that the manuscript be destroyed. That these instinctive desires of a delicate soul were not followed out, we can only be grateful. We should have regretted the loss of this story, just as the spiritual world has regretted ever since, that the letters that passed between St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane-Frances de Chantal were destroyed

through the humility and delicacy of the latter. We should never have appreciated our loss had the great Teresa's letters been destroyed.

It is an interesting coincidence that Marie de Chergé, who was destined to die a missionary in China, should have received her first impressions of grace in connection with a priest of God who was himself on the point of leaving France as a missionary to China. "I was five years old," says Marie in this little story of hers, "when one of the fathers of the Society of Jesus, accompanied by my brothers, who were his pupils, came to our home in the country. Before leaving for his mission in China, he desired to bid good-bye to my father, whom he knew very well. Father blessed us all, and to me he gave a singular name for so small a child; he called me "Mother Abbess." So well did this name seem to suit me, in the judgment of those around, that I was addressed by this name as often as by 'Marie.' "

During the years that followed this memorable visit, Marie felt the grace of God growing in her soul; she felt the first beginnings of a desire to belong entirely to Christ. The blessing of the missionary, she thinks, was bearing fruit. Even before her First Communion she used to admire the men and women consecrated to God in holy Religion; she looked upon them as angels. "I shall be a Religious one of these days," the little girl used to say to herself.

But her graces ran deeper than this. She was drawn to experience a real feeling of love and gratitude towards her God, who was favoring her soul with His grace and quiet peace. Marie seemed, even at this early age, to realize the indwelling of God in her soul through sanctifying grace, and she seems to have experienced distinct effects of the presence within her of the Divine life. She mentions God as speaking to her soul, and she is persuaded that on the day of her First Holy Communion, His sweet Voice is going to speak more distinctly than ever before. She, undoubtedly, experienced at this time the perception of those interior "words" which are rather spoken to the soul, than formed to the ear. Marie says: "I heard Him calling me by name and telling me what He desired of me. Although the Voice on this beautiful day (of her First Holy Communion), was not as loud as my child-piety had expected, it was nevertheless at this time that Our Lord planted in my heart the attraction that was to grow ever stronger."

Marie was eleven years old when she made her First Holy Communion on May 30, 1861. Love of God struck deeper root in her delicate child-heart. The attraction towards Him was palpable. She began to meditate as best she could. She would read the *Following of Christ* and meditate upon its sweet and quiet phrases. The fragrance of grace was falling richly about her. Yet

withal, though quiet and tending to the serious, she was a normal child and would romp and laugh and play with her older brothers and with her sister.

We note something here on the day of her First Communion which later on was going to try her soul severely; a certain stiffness and scrupulosity in her piety which was the result partly of mistaken traditions, and partly of the lack of proper direction. A master of the spiritual life has said that the good director of souls is rare. So it would seem. St. Teresa had her own troubles; and our little Marie suffered from the lack of enlightened direction. She says: "I had no one to guide my soul. My mother, while very holy, was also very scrupulous, and later on it was pitiful to see her. . . . Our good country priest was very narrow and said nothing that could help me. Feeling a little of this timorousness on the day of my First Communion, I was so afraid of doing something wrong that I did not give myself up entirely to the influences of that Divine love which was beginning to take full possession of my soul." But notwithstanding that lack of proper guidance, this little flower of God was to continue to unfold its beauty, to give forth fragrance of perfume and to sparkle with the dew of God's grace that had fallen upon its precious petals.

"The following months were full of graces,"

she says. "A mysterious recollection stole over my senses. I did not know what it was. . . . I thought everyone felt the same, and that First Holy Communion produced this strong influence in the souls of all." It was only later in her Religious life that she understood the meaning of these graces. The indwelling of Christ through His sanctifying grace was now more strongly sensed. She could feel sensibly, as it were, His presence. "He seemed to be near me. It was quite different from what faith or the imagination can conjure up." Marie, some time after her First Communion was enrolled in the scapular. Our Blessed Lady, that day, flooded her soul with sweetness. On the anniversary of her First Communion she renewed publicly its ceremonies. Now, in truth, Our Lord had taken possession of her soul. She could now think only of Him. She received permission to approach the Holy Table oftener, and after the lapse of a couple of years became a daily communicant. This practice, in those days, must have been quite out of the ordinary.

But the soul of this growing child was destined to be sorely tried. Her mother, we have seen, was herself a sufferer from scruples. They were living in the country, some distance from the town of St. Hilaire. The only spiritual ministrations the family received, were at the hands of a country priest, and this one was of the tim-

orous type. It was shortly after the beginning of her practice of daily Communion that a storm of scruples broke over her soul. To whom was she to go? Her mother could not help her. Finally, she did go to the parish priest. "He was content," Marie tells us, "to listen very patiently—he was a good gentle man—to the details of my terrors. . . . I went through a real agony, a kind of death."

And so the tempest continued to blow and to bluster, until one came who could understand. Marie's younger sister was now being prepared for her First Holy Communion, and a Jesuit Father came to give the retreat in preparation. She opened her heart to him. "His clear principles," she says, "so wise and so true, impressed me deeply." The storm now began to subside. God Himself began to speak to her kindly again, and it was He, definitely, who cured her, through the enlightening and potent infusions of His grace.

At this time Marie-Antoinette began to read the lives of the saints. These helped her and filled her as centuries before they had filled St. Ignatius Loyola, with holy desires of imitation and emulation. She read the life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga and her soul was inclined towards penance. She came to be on the lookout for occasions of mortification, and she began to deprive herself of a number of little things that formerly

had given her pleasure or satisfaction. She enters into no details of this early development, but we can well form to ourselves a concept of the little mortifications and acts of self-denial she practised.

But, as the girl grew older, things did not continue in this simple way. With a generous and ardent disposition, such as Marie's, and with a soul as young and inexperienced as was hers, it would be surprising if mortification and penance were not carried to excess. Penance began to have a greater and greater attraction for her, and in her youthful fervor, without ever dreaming of the advisability of asking the priest, she began to invent instruments of torture and to use them. She slept upon a plank; she put sticks into her bed and thus changed off with her plank. She made pointed bracelets for her arms and wore them and, like Father William Doyle, she went in among the nettles to feel their sting. Later on, she performed that species of self-torture so classical with the saints; with a red-hot iron she blistered the name of Jesus upon her breast.

There was not the slightest thing which frightened her in all this, or which carried to her the least feeling of repugnance. Quite the contrary. She was simply following out the lead of a very strong attraction and experienced, from this concession to her inclinations, the satisfaction which concession ordinarily brings. Only, as these inclina-

tions were holy, the satisfaction was that of the soul. "All this gave me so much joy," she writes, "that I was afraid of committing sin." So keen was her pleasure in doing these things that she doubted if they were really pleasing to her Lord. Her soul surely was advancing by leaps and bounds along the path of grace, and her desire for the Religious life was growing ever stronger.

Yet, it is a most interesting thing to note in the development of this soul, and the unfolding of this Religious vocation, that, though grace was potent and her aspirations high and generous, she still has to reproach herself, at this period, with some concessions to nature. Nature indeed takes a long time to die in the best of us and many lay aside the old man only with their corpse in the grave. We have said, that these precious gifts of grace which were given to her soul, did not prevent Marie from growing up, to all exterior appearances, a normal child. Her family never knew the things which were taking place within the rich cabinet of her soul; so little did they suspect the existence of these inner treasures, that they had no thought of any desire of hers for the Religious life.

Now, Marie when she was developing into young womanhood had that desire for admiration, so innate in the feminine character. True, she had no taste for social life. She was timid and retiring, and went out but seldom. But she

did desire to appear well, and she gave a good deal of time and attention to the details of her dress and appearance. Later in life, she reproached herself for this weakness, perhaps with what seems to us the usual holy exaggerations of the saints. "I lost much time in frivolities," she laments, "and was always over-anxious to look well." Of course, there was no question of her having gone against her conscience in all this. Grace had won over her soul too completely, to let her deliberately fall into any palpable imperfection. She tells us herself she was unconscious of any wrong-doing, and it was not until later years that she looked upon these actions as belonging to the class of the natural, and of the less perfect.

It was at this stage of her spiritual life, that Marie was made the recipient of a very consoling grace. There was nothing very extraordinary in it, and numbers of other souls have enjoyed the strength and the lasting sweetness resulting therefrom. This is why the experience we now relate, though only a dream, must be considered as a grace, and a mark that God had looked upon her soul and loved her. Marie saw, one night in sleep, Our Blessed Lady, God's Mother, coming towards her, white and beautiful. Our Lady held out her hands, took Marie in her arms and kissed her gently on the forehead saying: "You will be a Religious." "Although this was only a

dream," says Marie, "I awoke in great consolation and full of confidence that if such was the Will of God, all obstacles would disappear, since the Blessed Virgin took my cause in hand."

Thus it was that the Little Flower of Mount Carmel, after having passed through great storms and darknesses of desolation, had her soul illumined and her heart refreshed with joy, from some such sweet and holy vision that had come to her in her dreams. It was the venerable Mother Anne of Jesus who appeared to the Little Flower, and embraced her too, and assured the little saint of her protection and the fondness of her love. After that, in spite of the dark depths of her desolation, the Little Flower felt she was not entirely a reprobate. So did a blessed dream comfort and console the heart of Marie-Antoinette. She now began to say every day the *"Memorare"* to "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" in order to obtain the grace of knowing her vocation surely, and of following it faithfully.

Thus her soul expanded under the developing effluence of grace, that flowed out from God upon her. Her love of spiritual things day by day increased. An interior life of strength and consistency was developing. Grace led her into the practice of meditation and taught her,—it was her only teacher,—how to do it well. There were moments of intense consolation. Prayer was an

attraction. She delighted to put herself into the presence of her God and to let her heart's affection stream out towards Him in a simple regard of love. Early in the morning she would now rise, even in winter, quietly, like a thief in the night, so as not to disturb the still sleeping family. Mass and Communion would complete this preface of a holy day.

And the day *was* holy,—well spent in Our Lord,—not only perfumed with prayer, but strengthened also and solidified with holy works. She engaged herself in what we call today social service. Marie had taken in, from the example of her father and mother, a love for and devotion to the poor. These, the poor of Christ, she had seen always well treated at her father's door. A desire now grew up to help them. She wished her family to be still more wealthy, so as to be able to do more for them. As it was, she found happiness in visiting in their homes, in doing them humble and kindly services. At home, she would make clothes for them, and when Saturday and Sunday would return, she would help gather up the children of the little parish and be insistent in their religious instruction.

It seems very providential that Marie was thus, early in her spiritual life, brought into such frequent contact with the poor, and the delight she took in this work was, undoubtedly, although she was not at that time aware of it, the first

germ of her vocation to the Society of the Helpers of the Holy Souls. "Through all," she says, "the attraction to the Religious life increased. It was especially after Holy Communion that I heard the Voice of Our Lord.

"Yet, I was afraid of being deceived and I feared that all this was but a passing fervor." Still, no other spiritual confidant, no other director did she have except the scrupulous country priest. "I spoke several times of this to my confessor, but I felt that I needed a more enlightened director. . . . I begged the Blessed Virgin to send me someone."

But God was watching over this child now growing into young womanhood. The Eternal Bridegroom had not lavished so many signs of His predilection upon this gentle soul without intending to call her His spouse. This flower had unfolded beautiful petals under the warming influence of grace; the time had now come, in the Providence of God, for a still further unfolding of its beauty through a clearer and more distinct call to a state of perfection.

CHAPTER SECOND.

VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

TO those who have followed the development of the soul of Marie through the foregoing pages, and watched the mounting of her spiritual life to heights more and more ethereal, it would appear as a natural sequence of events, that she should begin to think now more seriously and concretely of devoting her entire energy to the service of God in the Religious life. Yet, for a variety of reasons she had, up to the years of early womanhood, taken no serious steps in this direction. Owing to a certain timidity, joined with a humble opinion of herself and of her state of virtue, she was not certain as to the genuineness of her call. Then, there was a very deep and exceedingly tender attachment to her family, which may have been a subconscious element in her postponement of a definite decision which she was well aware would be the cause of infinite pain to those she loved best in this world. But, perhaps, the most potent reason for her long delay was the absence of any competent direction. She saw her need, however, and often be-

sought Our Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to send her someone.

Our Lord heard her prayer and sent her a director. Not at first in the shape of man, but of a book: *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. One day, in going into the library of her home, her eyes fell upon a book she had not noticed before, the little volume of the *Exercises*. So perfectly attuned was the soul of this young girl to the finer instincts and more delicate perceptions of the spiritual life, that immediately upon reading the "Annotations," which prelude the *Exercises* proper, she understood the importance of this little work, and with no other guide, she determined to make a retreat after the manner explained in its pages. She thought within herself, that she wanted to be transformed in Christ. "I had no other guide to direct me in this retreat, which I undertook while at the house in the country, away from my family. It was near Holy Week. Each one was busy with his own work. . . . I used to take a crucifix and to go off alone to a grotto in the woods that girded the house. This grotto was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin."

Except for the housework of the earlier morning and the time of her meals, she spent the whole day alone at the grotto, passing through the different meditations indicated by St. Ignatius and communing quietly with God in prayer. What

this little book of the *Exercises* has done for thousands of others it did also for her. New light fell about her; a deeper insight into the ways of God came to her, and keener perceptions of the means to be employed for the salvation of souls. Above all, a clear and solid Christian philosophy of life was now formed to act as a foundation and support of all her higher aspirations. Grace flowed in still more potent streams. "Wonderful was the way Our Lord attracted me. . . . As soon as I would place myself in the presence of My Lord, He came to me as though entering my very soul, different than the way of sanctifying grace. . . . He took possession of all my faculties and powers . . . I had but to look at the crucifix or at that book. Bright light came and torrents of Divine grace inundated my soul."

This retreat marks a very distinct stage in the evolution of her soul. It was at this time that those physical penances we have spoken of were gone through, and with that interior delight which is so characteristic of the saints of God. Her works for the poor increased, as also the help she gave her parish priest in the instruction of the children. With all this, there came more distinct and stronger desires for the Religious life. Her mind was now practically, though not absolutely, made up. But with it all came also conflict. Sometimes, at the thought of the Reli-

gious life, strange repugnances would clinch her soul. The thought of its self-sacrifice and its self-denial would fill her with dread, and the very idea of giving up her family would bring upon her, she says, an anguish as of death. There were times, in this interior combat, when she felt as if she were being slain in doubt and in anguish and in fear.

There came now a little incident which in adding to her pain, led her to seek a definite and final settlement of her aspirations for the Religious life. She was of marriageable age. Her parents had in mind a certain match which would be honorable for the family and pleasing to themselves. They proposed therefore to her one day, for marriage, a certain young man of her acquaintance. Marie realized, at once, that she had already delayed too long to broach to her parents the subject of her vocation. Her answer, however, was not final. She had been aspiring, she said, after a nobler union; she had set her eyes upon her Bridegroom, Christ. But she would think and pray and let them know her decision. Her good father and devoted mother, staunch Catholics as they were, felt deeply the pain of disappointment. This could not escape their daughter, and she suffered accordingly. "It was the first time I had ever given them any pain, and I had to fight against my own heart before wounding theirs."

Direction now became imperative. Marie bethought herself of an old friend of the family, to whom in this crisis she might address herself. Because she could not visit him, she decided to write to Père Rabeau of the Society of Jesus. To him, then, she opened up her soul. He examined, prayed, and in a series of letters allayed all her doubts, letting her know that by all indications she enjoyed a very distinct call to the Religious life. There remained only the question of choosing an Order or Congregation, which would satisfy the aspirations and the character of his spiritual daughter.

It was at this time that Père Rabeau mentioned, we think with some sort of emphasis, the Helpers of the Holy Souls. The work of the Helpers suited Marie very well. She had now for many years, in fact, been engaged in it and she liked it. Administering to the poor, visiting the sick, teaching little children the ways of God—all this appealed to Marie and in all this she had been long engaged. But she had had in mind an older institute, well established and with fine old traditions. "Yes, this congregation is new, and this is why you will find it bright with its first fervor," argued Père Rabeau. This idea was pleasing to her. Père Rabeau, then, visited in her behalf the house of the Helpers at Paris, spoke of her to Reverend Mother St. Louis, and sent her the life of the saintly Mother Foundress. A decision

was accordingly arrived at. It was to be the Religious life, and it was to be with the Helpers of the Holy Souls.

But now came the trying ordeal. Marie had to tell her parents of her decision, a decision that was final. She foresaw the blow this news would be for them, and she knew the anguish her own heart would, thereby, endure. Her parents took the word exceedingly hard. For the sympathetic and intelligent onlooker this is a point of much human interest. Marie's father, Charles de Chergé, had given the best energies of his life to the advancement of the cause of the Church and, like ever so many of his type, he was a deeply religious man. He had in his early youth been connected with and written for the legitimist periodical of Poitiers, *Gazette de l'Ouest,* through which he fought for Church and for State. He became a lawyer. But his scholarly tastes were broad. He was interested in antiquities and joined the *Societé des Antiquaires de l'Ouest.* He did much valuable research among the old monuments and convents and abbeys around and about Poitiers, and his industry and scholarship bore fruit through the press. Besides scholarly archæological monographs, his piety led him to compose *The Lives of the Saints of Poitou* and a *History of the Religious Congregations Originating in Poitou.* This says enough for the Catholicism and piety of the father.

Marie's mother was a des Ages, a family like her husband's, of that traditional type of old French noble families, where honor and strong patriotism, deep and tender piety, reside in a degree unique among the races of the modern world. Madame de Chergé's aunt, Jeanne-Elizabeth Bichier des Ages, was the venerable foundress of the congregation of the Daughters of the Cross, known as the Sisters of St. Andrew, and all of her family had been prominent not only in the circumstances of their birth, but by the devotion and zeal of their Catholic piety. Whenever Père Rabeau, who knew the family so well, speaks of Madame de Chergé in his letters to Marie, he refers to her as "your saintly mother."

Yet, such is the strength and the tenderness of the family tie, developed in this type of old French family, that Marie's parents, in spite of their traditional faith and lively piety, could not bear the thought of giving her up. Her father could not bring himself to consent, and so deep a wound did the decision of the daughter inflict upon the heart of the mother that, for days after Marie's announcement of her decision, she could hardly speak for grief and disappointment. Sorrow ran so deep and poignant, that she fell ill and her life was endangered. "She, then, became cold and indifferent towards me," laments Marie, "she ceased to notice me and would reproach me

painfully. I know all this was caused by the sufferings she was enduring. That my own decision as to the Religious state was the cause of all this made me suffer so much the more." Surely nature still runs strong even in pious people, and this poor child in her early twenties was tried most bitterly before she was able to win the fight for her vocation.

Marie's desire would have been to leave immediately for Paris and begin the exercises of the novitiate. But owing to the opposition of her parents, Père Rabeau thought it advisable to wait. The departure was therefore put off until such time as her afflicted parents could bring themselves to consent to their daughter's holy designs. So one year passed and then another. Marie's love for her own home and her attachment to her parents was no less than theirs, and the ties of nature lent only a too willing assent to the delay which her director had counselled. She had later to reproach herself with some weakness during these years when, had she been stronger, she might have hastened the departure. Still, she was safe under her confessor's direction, and her soul continued to advance in the ways of God. At the age of twenty-four, October 23, 1874, she made the consecration of her whole being to Our Lord Jesus Christ. The next year, in June, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, she made a vow of chastity. On May 28, 1876, she consecrated her-

self to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The above dates, together with that of her First Holy Communion, in later years, she speaks of as forever graven on her memory, for the recollection of Christ's sweet happiness.

In March, 1877, following the advice of her director, Marie began a correspondence with the Mother General of the newly-founded Society, Mère de la Miséricorde. She writes from St. Hilaire: "I have long desired to write to you, but without daring to do so . . . I feared to be indiscreet, and yet, I felt that it would be a great benefit to me, and I knew that your indulgence would pardon me for so doing . . . Today, however, I am yielding to my inclinations, and I shall begin a correspondence which will end whenever you should so desire. I am going to open my heart to you, so that you may know me thoroughly. . . ."

Thus, during the whole course of this correspondence does Marie give proof of her attachment to the Religious life, of the ingenuous candor of her soul, and of the trials and graces with which her Divine Spouse prepared this delicate flower for transplantation into His more intimate garden of the Religious life. It was during this period that she pronounced a vow in favor of the Holy Souls, made by all the members of the Society of the Helpers. "I have taken a little step, Mother, which brings me nearer to you.

May I tell you? Outside of my director, you will be the only one to know it. I have asked permission to make the vow in favor of the Holy Souls . . . Now my life has, in its small way, the same object as has yours, though in merit it is very far removed."

Still the years, precious years, passed on, and it seemed as if no material change had come about with regard to her parents' attitude, and she herself was torn by a double attachment. November 8, 1878, Marie wrote to the Reverend Mother: "I await the moment of God . . . I want to be told to 'go!' I implore the Souls in Purgatory to hasten the moment when I shall belong entirely to Him. The attraction to the Religious life is always great, in spite of the repugnances of nature and of interior struggles, and, because I cannot yet pursue this attraction, it becomes a source of suffering to me."

It was during the months that followed that a change of heart must have come over her parents. She was allowed, finally, to go to Paris to make a three days' retreat at the Mother-House of the Helpers, Rue de la Barouillère. This was in July, 1879, and the story of her soul during these days is interesting indeed. She suffered desolation. An intimate and poignant trial, whose nature she does not mention, for a short while gripped her soul. But she remained steadfast. She knew it was all a purifying process. Even the

habit of the Helpers caused her suffering at this time, for she longed to wear the Religious habit of one of the older Orders. "But God kept my heart, though so miserable, for He wished to make it entirely His own."

The clouds now began to lift. Her heart was fixed, her parents were relenting. Soon all would be clear for her definite removal to Paris to enter the novitiate. It was at last determined, after letters and conversations with Père Rabeau and with the Reverend Mother, that she should enter the novitiate the following summer, 1880. The year 1879 saw the resignation of Marshall MacMahon as president of the Third Republic and the passing from power of the clerical and monarchist majorities. Gambetta had been marshalling the Jacobins and the anti-clericals into an organization, which became strong enough to overthrow the divided forces of the Catholic parties. Grévy, an ardent Republican, was elected president, and by 1880 the expulsion of the Religious had begun.

They were extinguishing the lights of Heaven! Was it prudent for Marie to go to Paris and to enter the novitiate under such circumstances? It was now Père Rabeau's turn to hesitate. But Marie had waited long enough. She was now thirty years of age. Her parents, her own deep love of them, Père Rabeau's directions—all this, had been responsible for the years of delay. How-

ever, Marie was determined; she was going to enter *now*. She would go to England, she told Père Rabeau, where a novitiate had just been opened, rather than delay further. "I had waited too long already." But news came that the novitiate had been removed from Paris to Blanchelande. There was not the same danger now, and Père Rabeau consented.

Thus in the summer of 1880, Marie-Antoinette de Chergé left her loving parents and the quiet château in the charming country lying out from St. Hilaire, and went not northeast, this time, to Paris, but almost directly north to Blanchelande, up in the northwest corner of Normandy, some forty miles directly south of Cherbourg. She was accompanied by her brother and his wife, Monsieur and Madame de Chergé, who after the lapse of some years, would again accompany a young lady thither, a daughter, this time, whom they were giving to Our Lord. Here at this ancient seat of an old-time monastery, in hallowed Normandy, did Marie finally enter upon her Religious life. She was now definitely transplanted into God's cloistered garden. Here, fostered by God's warmth and sunshine, and strengthened also by the stress of storm, this sweet soul will become still more gentle, and this purely spiritual heart, who knew how to love, will become instinct with a still more burning fire.

CHAPTER THIRD.

EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE.

IN the summer of 1880 Marie began her Religious life. We find her near an old monastic town of northern Normandy, within the old walls of the formerly abandoned monastery of Blanchelande that the Helpers of the Holy Souls, having had to flee from Paris, were inhabiting. The novitiate, though for most young Religious a period of much happiness and holy joy, has also for many its periods of storm and trial. The soul must be moulded unto Christ; bonds and ties which linked it to the world must, in many things, be snapped and broken, and in all things it must be spiritualized. This effect so wholesome and beneficial in itself, and productive of so much solid peace to the soul, when once it is achieved, must be paid for, as with everything else that is good in life, by some of that pain of soul which follows upon combat and renunciation. Thus it was with Marie during certain periods of her novitiate days.

We know from what the foregoing chapters have told us, that hers was a soul keenly sensitive to certain kinds of suffering. The renuncia-

tion of her family, the severing of bonds perhaps too natural, this had already wounded her heart, and these wounds, during her novitiate days, were from time to time going to pain and to bleed. It must have been just this that caused a rush of sorrow and desolation during the early part of her novitiate, which called forth the following letter from an old friend of her family, Père Rémond:

"My dear Child:

"I deeply sympathize with you in your trial, but I am not surprised at it. The demon, jealous of the advantages that you have found for you and yours in the Religious life,—for a Religious is a blessing to the family,—jealous, I say of these advantages, does all he can to discourage you, to make you abandon your project."

After some wholesome advice, as to how to combat this temptation of discouragement and human attachment to those she had left in the world, Père Rémond closes with words of encouragement and assures her of his prayers and moral support.

"Should you be discouraged and turn back? Certainly not. Say to the demon: 'It is not for you that I have become a Religious, it is for my own sanctification and for that of those who are dear to me. So I will not abandon my project. I began it for the glory of God, who is so insulted at the present time, . . . I intend to continue; I shall remain within this blessed refuge until I die.' "

It is wholesomely instructive, yes, and reassuring also to those that suffer, and to weak humanity in general, to see this young woman of so strong a spiritual nature, with a background of years that had been given over to mortification and to prayer, and to service for the glory of God, to see her now, at the beginning of her Religious life, thus tormented with a temptation to discouragement, and even abandonment of a project which had been a desire for years. It is instructive, because we see that no soul is immune from periods of stress and storm; reassuring, because, when this trial was over, new graces and more delicate happiness were vouchsafed her.

At the end of August, Marie made a retreat with the community under the direction of the saintly Father Ginhac of the Society of Jesus. Then in two months she received the holy habit and, with it, a new and holy name. We shall speak of Marie, henceforth, as Sister Mary of St. Bernard. The day after this happiness came upon her, Sister St. Bernard received a consoling letter from the Mother General.

"Dear Child:

"There is great rejoicing today in Heaven and in Purgatory, and you are the cause of this joy. You well understand how deep is my sympathetic feeling for you on this day, and I feel sure that you have no doubt of my interest. My love and prayers seek out this new Helper in a special way,

and it is my hope that she will not be the least fervent and devoted. . . . Among the favors I ask for you from the Divine Master, who today, is so anxious to load you with His graces, is an overflow of those heavenly joys which are the fruit of one's annihilation in God. These blessings you are going to bestow upon the Holy Souls by your prayers, your sacrifices and by your whole life as a Helper. It is not asking too much to beg of God, for His little servant, a few of the crumbs of His consolations which He throws out with such great liberality. . . . I hope soon to have the consolation of seeing you in your new habit and under your new name,—of seeing you just as open and happy in the Lord as a soul of your type ought to be, a soul that has been favored with so many favors and proofs of His love.

"Believe me, dear child, to be more than ever in this Divine Master,

"Your devoted and affectionate mother,

"MARIE DE LA MISÉRICORDE."

Sister St. Bernard's old parish priest and former confessor, who was not able to help her in her scruples nor to guide her in the difficulties about her vocation, was able now to write her some beautiful and consoling letters, instilled with the love of God and redolent of a delicate spirituality. "Oh! my child," he wrote to her at this time, "how beautiful are the lives of the Christian virgins, whose days are consumed in the service of Jesus! . . . He, to whom you have

given yourself, will not be outdone in generosity. You will never be able to make an act of love which is not a part of your debt. Oh! how deeply He has loved you. . . . Sustained by these considerations you will be able to recover a little peace." Undoubtedly that which had cost her so much suffering before the settlement of her vocation, her deep and sensitive affection for her parents, was now again wounding her heart.

But the first year of her novitiate slipped by. The struggle for the complete supernaturalization of her affections was not overpowering, for her soul was strong and her attachment to God was as dear as life. Her Mistress of Novices, Mother St. Francis Borgia, saw the worth of this valiant soul, loved it and guided it safely on. Sister St. Bernard's fervor during the whole of her novitiate was something that one would notice and pick out in a crowd. The impression she gave, at this time, was of a soul intimately united to God. Indeed, what else could we expect from one with lively affections, supernaturalized by the infusion of such delicate graces. Charity had long burned in her breast; its fire was now deepened and strengthened. The esteem Sister St. Bernard's Mistress had for her was returned by a sincere affection. Mother St. Francis Borgia was called to Paris in the spring of 1882, and there were tears at her departure; but the incoming Mistress, Mother Magdalen of Pazzi, soon

won over the entire confidence of Sister St. Bernard, a confidence she was to enjoy for years.

The thirty-days' retreat came and went and the closing months of the novitiate were now slipping away. Our novice had, up to this time, remained humble and hidden. She had taken the novitiate hard and gave an impression of some stiffness and rigidity. She was somewhat timid and seemed rather delicate in health. Yet, there was hidden within her a practical aptitude for a life of action and zeal that no one had suspected. An accident brought it to the front.

One of the helpers, in charge of the children's meetings in the little town, was unavoidably detained at home and Sister St. Bernard was sent out to replace her in giving a spiritual conference to the children. She spoke with a practical clearness that the children could understand, and with an energy that was fired by her love of God and the enthusiasm of her spirit. Her little novice-companion was surprised at this sudden show of capabilities no one had suspected, and, returned home, told her Mistress of her discoveries. Mother Magdalen of Pazzi, therefore, sent Sister St. Bernard out again, acting herself, this time, as companion, for she desired to see with her own eyes. The novice had not exaggerated. This young Sister was evidently a born teacher because she was a born enthusiast, and under her restrained and novice-like exterior, her Mistress

discovered the soul of an apostle. Here was a subject that was going to be useful to the little congregation of the Helpers of the Holy Souls.

The end of the novitiate came. Her first Vows were pronounced "in the joy of her soul," November 8, 1882. She was sent immediately from the old monastery at Blanchelande to the Mother-House at Paris. She received many beautiful letters and among them was one from her old spiritual guide and friend of her family, Père Rabeau:

"My Child:

I cannot tell you how happy I am to see you settled at the centre of your Society, and accessible to your family at Paris and St. Hilaire . . . Monsieur de Chergé spent two or three days in Poitiers and we talked about many things. . . . If the paternal heart still suffers—and how could it be otherwise?—be sure that there is no bitterness, or at least, what suffering remains is, as it were, drowned in the consolation and joy which always springs from sacrifice. As to your spiritual father, his journey, though long, was not painful. . . . If there was suffering, it was embraced for your mother and sisters. The thought of seeing them, raised sweet hopes, and made me forget all the fatigues of the journey."

And now we meet with a surprise. What Père Rabeau is going to say, indicates to us that Sister St. Bernard has spoken to him about the foreign missions, and has expressed a desire to labor in

this portion of Christ's vineyard. Yet, we will remember that her earliest impressions, as a little girl of five, were the recollections of a missionary going off to China. Père Rabeau continues: "You would like, dear Sister, to obtain the halo of an apostle by going to China, and you think that your immolation would be more complete by this separation from your family and Mother-House. You think that your labors there would produce more good than your efforts in France, even with Heaven's blessing."

Thus is laid before us what Sister St. Bernard had written to her old-time director. She desired the missions. What she was doing was not enough. She must suffer more and die for Christ. Father counselled obedience and that spirit of abnegation by which we forego our desires, even with regard to different fields of God's own work.

Almost immediately after her return to the Mother-House, at Rue de la Barouillère, Sister St. Bernard, now Mother St. Bernard (for the choir Religious are called "Mother" after their first vows), was shifted over to the incipient dwelling on the slopes of Montmartre, at 9 Rue Antoinette, on a spot sanctified forever as having witnessed the first vows of St. Ignatius Loyola and his small band of companions, August 15, 1534. The chapel, in which this memorable event took place was torn down during the stormy days of the Revolution; but the Revolution could not

take away the spot, and the Helpers chose it for a dwelling and as a center for their spiritual ministrations to the often rough inhabitants of that part of the great city. The neighborhood has since been still further enhanced, by the building of the great Basilica of Montmartre, which today casts the blessing of its presence over the little community of 9 Rue Antoinette.

Mother St. Bernard went with zest into the work assigned her. She was put in charge of the children's gatherings and classes, and set to work teaching them catechism and preparing them for their First Holy Communion. She was ordered also to take under her wing the solidarity of the Children of Mary. One of those who lived with Mother St. Bernard has this to say of her manner of work at Rue Antoinette, and of her character: "She gave herself with the greatest earnestness to all these activities, and although a little constrained, she was amiable. In her dealings with the community, she was always charitable and full of delicate attention. She was named Minister of the house, and she remained humble, modest, and, towards those older than herself in Religion, respectful."

Here then, for the time being, was Mother St. Bernard's mission, and there can be no doubt but that her desires of labor and of abnegation in the cause of Christ met here their partial satisfaction. This is a rude part of Paris. The peo-

ple are poor, many, most of them, are without much education and many of them uninstructed in the Christian religion and untrained in the principles of morality. Among these good-hearted but unfortunate people, and especially among their children, Mother St. Bernard found labor for Christ and she also found suffering.

But there was something else, too, that satisfied her missionary spirit. The foundation of the Helpers, only just now getting under way, was exceedingly poor. The house was a broken-down ramshackle old place and the poor and ill-appointed little shell of a chapel, a shack covered with zinc, was separated from the house by the distance of the whole property. A wall separated the lot from the street. From the house, the lower yard was approached by a wretched narrow stairway of wood. To the chapel was attached a poor and ill-accommodated "club-room," where the children met for their catechism and where, on Sunday afternoons, the people would gather for instructions and social gatherings. The Blessed Sacrament had to be enclosed in an iron safe, because of its distance from the house and for fear of the rough characters, who prowled about the premises at night, looking for shelter in nearby nooks and corners. Here, then, could Mother St. Bernard expend some of her missionary zeal; here could her heart dilate under the

influence of Divine grace and her love of Christ find its satisfaction in laboring for and instructing these poor people who inhabited the poverty-stricken and crowded quarter of the great capital.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

RELIGIOUS SUPERIOR.

AFTER two years of fruitful work in this portion of Our Lord's vineyard, years during which spiritual contact with souls brought more vividly before her mind the principles of the spiritual life, a change took place with regard to the position of Mother St. Bernard in the little Community of 9 Rue Antoinette. A novitiate had been opened in the Isle of Jersey and, in April 1884, Mother Mary of St. Denis, who had been the Superior at Montmartre, was called thither to take charge of the novices. Mother St. Bernard was appointed to succeed her as Superior of the house.

Superiorship in any community is an added responsibility and brings its own trials and burdens. But to be Superior at this time at Montmartre, was the more particularly trying, as it had been decided to tear down the shabby, leaky, tottering old shell of a chapel, with its adjoining hall, and to rebuild something more fitting to be the abode of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, as well as something more suitable for teaching

catechism to the children, and for giving conferences to the people. It was during the Superiorship of Mother St. Bernard, that the last Sunday Mass was said in the old chapel. It was raining: the leaky roof was little protection and umbrellas had to be called into service during the Holy Sacrifice. The unboarded floor, soft from the water, that had been dripping on it the preceding night, refused to support the chairs and prie-dieu. Mother St. Bridget nearly toppled over into the mud when, in trying to kneel upon a prie-dieu, one leg of it went deep into the soft ground. These conditions offer some idea of what the Helpers had to endure during their first, as it were, pioneering days, at Montmartre. But that was the last Sunday. There were now two problems put up to the Mother Superior for solution. The first was the question of the Blessed Sacrament. Where might It be kept until the new chapel would be ready for Its reception? But this was soon solved: Mother St. Bernard would offer her room to her Lord, and she would take sleeping quarters somewhere in a corner of the house. This exigency comes as another indication of the poverty of the Community.

But there was another and a greater problem. The different organizations and ministrations of the Helpers had been started only a few months before and they were going along nicely,—the catechism classes for the children, occasional in-

structions and spiritual conferences for the older people, the sodality meetings and Benedictions during the afternoon, especially on Sunday—Mother St. Bernard would not hear of the discontinuance of these.

It was decided to use as a temporary chapel the large room or hall called "Bethlehem," which immediately adjoined the old one. Here the Blessed Sacrament would be brought every day, and here all those exercises, formerly carried out in the chapel, would be held. But this place also was not much more than a tumble-down old shed and it was, indeed, incapable of supporting in its present condition, the burden of so many people and the excitement of so much activity. It began to sag and its floor to tilt. The workmen declared the beams were rotten and the architect was summoned post-haste. There was nothing for it but to bolster up the old cage with props, and to hold together its separating walls with iron clamps and cables. The shack simply had to be held together until the new chapel was ready, for the activities of the Helpers could not be left off. To interrupt them would have been to lose the fruit of many months of labor; and the religious instruction of the people, now so consoling, would have had to be worked up all over again. Incidentally, the foundations for the new chapel had to go down very deep to reach solid ground, and great care had to be taken that the children and

older people, coming to the different exercises, would find a safe and ready entrance.

But Mother St. Bernard showed herself equal to the task and capable of shouldering the responsibility of all that was going on. It was undoubtedly difficult for the young Superior to begin her term of office under conditions of such trouble and disorder. But then, the Lord Christ was her support, and she made of Him the confidant of all her trials and worries. She could go to speak to Him whenever she desired, in the temporary shabby little chapel. His presence there made it beautiful to her, and the treasure of Christ's love was all she desired.

In the midst of the privations and discomforts of these heroic days, the heart of Mother St. Bernard must have been deeply consoled to see the wall of prejudice gradually breaking down, and to mark the number of conversions back to the practice of holy religion, brought about by the instrumentality of herself and her Community. One could not help noting the devotion of the Helpers, nor being edified by the sight of their poverty and distress. The meetings increased, sinners were brought back, and zealous priests were attracted to offer their services in cooperation with so fruitful an apostleship.

Among those who became very much attached to the Helpers and their work, was the Jesuit, Père Pennors, who came over, several times a

week, from the college at Rue de Madrid, to look after the men and boys who frequented Rue Antoinette. He had the consolation of continuing in this work for many months, but was called to larger and more heroic fields before the completion of the new "Bethlehem." Père Pennors had the heart of an apostle and he became deeply attached to Rue Antoinette, where he had seen so much good done for souls, and where he himself had been instrumental in leading back to the Good Shepherd so many of the sheep who had strayed. He had long desired to go on the Chinese missions, and his summons came in the summer of 1883, a few months before Mother St. Bernard had been named Superior. The dear Mother had always admired his devotedness, and after his departure she made the following extract of his farewell letter.

"I do not need to tell you, dear Mothers and Sisters, how much my leaving you affects me . . . It is not forbidden in the Society of Jesus to have a heart. I shall never forget this chapel, the scene of so many graces given to souls. You have seen only the exterior; I have been the witness of all that has passed between them and God. He will, I assure you, work more wonders still. Now, I offer my life for the good of Montmartre and it is thus, that I understand my departure. It is very little, to be sure. But if a glass of water given by Père Pennors will not be without its reward, what can be said of a life, of

little importance though it be? For God looks at the intention which inspires each act done for him."

Thus did a Jesuit find souls waiting for his ministrations on that very spot where, centuries before, the little band of the incipient Society of Jesus consecrated itself by vow to God; to this spot, now, came the sheep and lambs of Christ. They looked up for food and a Jesuit fed them, and the bonds between the Helpers of the Holy Souls and the sons of St. Ignatius were, hereby, tightened.

A sorrow now came upon Mother St. Bernard, but a sorrow that, in God's bounty to her and to her family, was not unaccompanied with deep spiritual consolation. In the month of October, 1884, Monsieur Charles de Chergé, her father, lay dying. Mother St. Bernard was called immediately to St. Hilaire, and she arrived in time to comfort the last moments of her aged parent and to spread the glow of God's light upon his bed of pain. She writes from St. Hilaire to her Superior General, Mère de la Miséricorde:

"Very Reverend Mother General:

"I found my poor father dying. But he recognized me perfectly, smiled at me and thanked God . . . He is in a sort of agony that may be long continued. He received all the sacraments yesterday with full consciousness . . . He blessed all his grandchildren and received the

plenary indulgence . . . My poor father was very happy to see me and I thank God for this favor. He showed me his crucifix and kissed mine. At present he seems to be passing through some sort of anguish, but I am unable to understand what he is saying. I suggest thoughts of love to him and abandonment to God . . . Dear Reverend Mother, what terrible hours these are!"

But the agony was not of long duration and the end came sooner than the family had expected. The next day Mother St. Bernard was able to write: "The sacrifice is consummated. My father died this morning at nine o'clock . . . peacefully in my arms . . . Now, he seems to be resting. His face is calm and smiling. Poor mother is admirable, but I fear the reaction." Mother St. Bernard had consoled her family at this crisis. To her parents, who had found it so very difficult to give her up to God, but a few years previous, she had brought the delicate light of God's grace in a moment of need. Her presence at the deathbed was the family's most precious boon; to her dying father, she was an angel of peace and comfort. She could return to Montmartre now feeling that she had amply repaid her parents for the sacrifice they had made in giving her up to God.

Back in her little Community, Mother St. Bernard was able to see within a short time the com-

pletion of the new chapel, and the consequent more efficient handling of the men and women and children, that were coming to the Convent for instruction and ministration. Her zeal increased and there was a temptation within her, a temptation classic with ardent souls, to undertake more than the strength or time of her Community could prudently handle. She had to moderate her desires, but God blessed visibly all her labors and those of her Community. Père Pennors wrote from time to time, from his missionary field in Shanghai, to console the Helpers of Montmartre by accounts of his own labors and of the wonderful work done by their Sisters in that far-off field. It was a great pleasure for those, in Paris, to hear of the noble work carried on by their Sisters in Shanghai, and souls separated by great seas were thus united together and to God, in mutual consolation.

We have already had a glimpse of the desires of Mother St. Bernard for the more difficult fields of the foreign missions. Her letter to Père Rabeau, at the time of her first Vows, showed us this. She had ever in her mind that recollection of her sixth year, when a Jesuit missionary, departing for China, had blessed her and called her "Mother Abbess." The departure of Père Pennors and his subsequent letters, increased the longing of her soul to do greater things for Christ. And she was preparing for

these greater labors. She was advancing continually in the way of God; her soul was becoming mature. Already in 1885 she had made that difficult promise, the vow always to do the most perfect thing. Her devotion was a light unto her Community.

Finally in 1888 a change did come. She was ordered to leave Paris, but not to go on the field of the foreign missions. She was sent as Superior of the house of the Helpers at Liège, in Belgium. Her suffering at this change was double. It was a source of pain to her sensitive and loving nature to leave a spot where she had suffered much for Christ, and brought so many souls back to His standard, and to leave the dear Community with which she had labored for the past few years. It was another source of pain that her desire for the missions were not yet destined to be fulfilled. Her Mother General wrote to her at this time:

"Help yourself with the thought of the missions, since Our Lord gives it to you . . . and allow yourself to be purified in the crucible of suffering and temptation . . . It is Our Lord Himself who places you where you are, and your actions will be ruled by His desires. This, dear child, is the wish of your affectionate Mother in Him,

"Marie de la Miséricorde."

At this period too, Père Valentin, S.J., wrote her a letter of spiritual guidance and inspiration

in which he held up to her the highest ideals of self-sacrificing devotion.

Mother St. Bernard went to her new field in Liège in the summer of 1888. In the following October, she commenced that final period of her education, as a Religious, by the Third Year of Probation (i. e. the third after the two years of novitiate), in which the Religious puts the finishing touches, as it were, to a formation that had been going on with the years.

The following year she received some visits that were to increase her desire for China. Some of the Superiors of the Helpers of the Holy Souls had come back to France for the choice of a Mother General. They re-elected the saintly Mère de la Miséricorde. After the election, two Superiors from China came with the Mother General to Liège, to visit Mother St. Bernard and to inspect her foundation. One of them, Mother St. Paul Miki (a Chinese, named after the Jesuit Japanese martyr), who died in Zi-ka-wei in 1907, was particularly charmed with the attentive and delicate hospitality Mother St. Bernard extended to her. She writes:

"I have kept continually in mind, the thought of writing to you in order to thank you, good Mother, for my charming visit to Liège. . . . How good and kind everybody was to me. I shall never forget the consolation I enjoyed, and your hospitality is engraven on my heart. I shall cer-

tainly remember all this very often as I kneel in the presence of the good God. I shall ask Him to bless your dear house and I shall pray also for the prosperity of this good country. I love the people of Liège and I assure you that the friendship I feel for them will never be blotted out. 'Flowers fade,' says the adage, 'but friendship remains forever.' Be so good, dear Mother, as to thank all the Mothers and Sisters for me, for their kindness. I shall never forget to pray for them and I hope that they will also pray for me.

"Receive, good Mother, the expression of my respect and gratitude. I am in union with your prayers for the Souls in Purgatory,

"Your very humble and affectionate sister in Our Lord,

"MARY of St. Paul Miki."

Mother Emmanuel, Superior at Zi-ka-wei wrote in similar terms:

"You showed me so much kindness and delicacy both maternal and sisterly, that we shall never cease, I assure you, to feel its sweetness as long as we live. I like to repeat the expression that Father N. used several times: 'This dear house of Liège is the vestibule of Paradise, where one tastes beforehand the sweetness of celestial joys.' "

Surely it is high encomium to the Christ-like sweetness and gentleness of Mother St. Bernard, that things of this kind should be said of the house which she ruled as Superior, and that let-

ters of this character should have been written back to her from China by her former guests.

In January, 1890, there came, from her Superiors, word that she was to pronounce her final Vows in Paris. The letter she, at that time, wrote to her Mother General is expressive as well of the joy of her heart at the prospect of this added grace, as of the humility of her soul in the consideration of herself as unworthy of it. She writes from Liège, January 30, 1890:

"Very Reverend Mother General:

"What letters I have received this week! I cannot describe all that is going on in my soul. . . . There are such deep things, so strong and at the same time so sweet, that it is impossible to describe them. . . . All that I can say is that my soul is overflowing with gratitude, love, and joy . . . the Religious profession! . . . I confess that I do not understand the infinite mercy of Our Lord and your immense charity. My soul is quite lost in the contemplation of the love of the Divine Master and the charity of the Society . . . I did not know it was for this reason that you called me to Paris. This is another delicate attention of your heart . . . It is indeed most sweet to make my Vows in this beloved house . . . But as all the joys of this world are incomplete, the dear ones here will be missing on the great day. You will, thus, have facilitated, I think, the possibility of seeing my dear mother assist at my last Vows. She is very old, seventy-four, and Liège is very far for her; but I hope

she will be able to come to Paris, and that will be for her a great consolation. If your heart is happy, Reverend Mother, how happy is not mine?"

Mother St. Bernard pronounced her Vows at Paris on February 11. Radiant with joy and burning with deeper love for Christ, she returned to Liège to communicate her happiness to her Sisters, and to spread about through her presence the light of God's grace. Approaching closer to her life than she realized, was the activity and suffering of the missionary field, but of a mission, at first, different from that of China.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

AMERICA.

IF Mother St. Bernard desired the foreign missions, it was to her also that the first secret of God's designs on the Helpers of the Holy Souls, for work in a great foreign country, was extraordinarily revealed. The fact that we are about to relate, took place in 1885, during the time that Mother St. Bernard was Superior at Montmartre.

When the house and chapel were under construction and the little Community was living as best it could in the little shack or shed above described, there came to the door a respectable looking gentleman. He asked to see the Superior. This was a short while after Vespers and Mother St. Bernard was reading aloud to the Community, when the portress announced the gentleman. The Mother Superior remained with him for a long time, and when she left the parlor, she was pale and visibly moved. The secret of God's designs for the Helpers in regard to America, had been revealed to her by this visitor, an American physician.

This was the story that had so moved her:

This gentleman was a convert to the Catholic Faith, who had suffered much from his family, because of his abandonment of Protestantism. For the last two years, he had lived in Marseilles, where he had made the acquaintance of a Jesuit Father, Père de Villefort, who became his spiritual director and bosom friend. To Père de Villefort, the American physician had revealed his most intimate thoughts and desires. Since his conversion, his one great desire was to bring about the conversion of his country to the Catholic Faith. He prayed a great deal and devoted much of his time to visiting and consoling the poor of Marseilles. One day, while in prayer, he saw in his mind a poor chapel, and Religious praying in it. God gave him to understand that these Religious women had been chosen by Him to work in America. The physician made known to his confessor this impression that had come to him in prayer, and Père de Villefort agreed that he should visit the different communities of women around and about Marseilles, to see if any of these were the ones of whom God seemed to have spoken. A visit to all the Religious communities of nuns, in the great city of the South, did not show him any that resembled those he had seen in prayer.

Thereafter, he prepared to return to America; but Père de Villefort had mentioned to him the Helpers of the Holy Souls, and advised him, on

his way through Paris, to visit their house at Montmartre, for it was there, said the Father, that St. Ignatius and his companions had pronounced their first Vows. Arrived in Paris, he made the mistake of many, and sought the house of the Helpers at the crest of the hill, near the basilica. But he was directed down to Rue Antoinette. He saw no house, for this was under construction, but only the temporary dwellings. Vespers was being recited by the Community as he entered to pray. At this moment, the revelation of the secret of his prayer came to him; this was the very chapel he had seen mentally some months before at Marseilles, and these were the nuns who had been made known to him. A great and profound happiness came over him, and he thanked God for His graces to him and to his country. Vespers over, he came to call for the Superior and, thus it was, that the secret was communicated to Mother St. Bernard.

Her apostolic heart was touched, and this seemed to be a further indication of God's Will to her, that she should work for Him and for His poor in foreign lands. She immediately wrote to Marseilles to Père de Villefort, for confirmation of this consoling story, and was assured that every word of it was true. She, then, communicated the glad tidings to the Mother General.

The physician left Paris to return to America, and not a word about him, had the Helpers of

the Holy Souls since heard. But God, it seems, had truly spoken through this fervent convert. Six years, it is true, were to pass before any foundation in America could be set up, but six years is only a day in the vast expanse of God's time. The American foundation of the Helpers was to come, and Mother St. Bernard was to be its first Superior. And not only of one foundation was she to be the first Superior, but of three strung out, almost in a straight line, across the great stretch of America's continent.

The Helpers of the Holy Souls had often looked wistfully across the Atlantic, over to that great Republic where apostolic work could be carried on with such freedom from annoying control, or restriction, or persecution on the part of the State, and with such facility on account of its great resources, and the generosity of its people. When this fresh call came, an invitation as it were from Heaven to begin the work, the Mother General intimated to Mother St. Bernard that probably America was to take the place of China with regard to her apostolic aspirations. Indeed, things were shaping themselves slowly but distinctly to that effect. The Helpers were not unknown in America.

A Jesuit, Père du Perron, had, from its inception, known the little Congregation and admired the character of its work and the spirit with which it was carried on. He was summoned to

America and stationed at Frederick, Maryland, where was the old novitiate of the Maryland-New York Province of the Society of Jesus. Père du Perron was assigned the important post of Novice Master: the spiritual formation of the young Religious was in his hands. He used to speak to his novices of devotion to the Souls in Purgatory, and he informed them that a congregation had been organized in France, for the special spread of this devotion. Thus were the Helpers made known to the coming generation of Jesuits. One of these, in particular, did not forget the information imparted by his Master, and, when he came later to France, Father Robert Pardow cultivated a special friendship for the Helpers. Returned to America, he proved himself a fervent apostle of the devotion to the Holy Souls until his death, in 1884. But Father Pardow was only one in a number.

The Jesuit, Father John Prendergast, was another who, while in Europe, had made the acquaintance of the Society. He had been able to look more particularly into their work, of which the practical character struck him immediately while he was sojourning at the Isle of Jersey. He was convinced, said he, that the place for the Society was in America. He wrote in 1881 to friends in America, to enroll them as honorary members of the Society. The first of these were Miss Anna Cronise and Miss Adèle Le Brun.

The latter was to be the Guardian Angel of the Helpers, when, after the lapse of eleven years, they finally came to New York. These two ladies gathered together others who were interested, so that soon an interested little group became enrolled as honorary members who, when the time should come, would be able to help financially and otherwise the projected foundation.

As soon as Father Prendergast returned, he, too, became active. He obtained the approval of the Pronotary Apostolic and Vicar General of New York, Mgr. Thomas Preston, who felt kindly disposed to the idea of bringing the Helpers to New York, and who indorsed the Society by his official approbation. On December 4th, 1887, Father Prendergast could write to Mère de la Miséricorde, who still continued as Mother General:

"A pious lady has just offered the sum of ten thousand dollars, for the foundation in New York of a house of the Helpers of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Would you be willing to come? Ecclesiastical authorities are favorable to the project . . . The field is vast . . . With New York, the whole of America lies before you! Be so kind as to let me know what you think of this offer, and under what conditions you would be willing to accept it . . . May the Holy Souls interest themselves in a project which is all for their benefit and for the greater glory of God. Believe, very Reverend Mother, in my religious devotion in Our Lord."

It was exceedingly painful for the Reverend Mother not to be able to accept at this time America's invitation, so kindly extended to her and to her children. In a letter to Father Prendergast, Mère de la Miséricorde set forth the reasons why this foundation could not yet be undertaken. Naturally, Father Prendergast was disappointed, and the money offered had to be used in favor of another Order.

In 1890, a priest of the diocesan clergy and two American ladies visited in Paris, at Rue de la Barouillère, the Mother-House of the Society. They knew friends of the Helpers in Canada and the United States, and, before their departure from New York, they had discussed the subject of an American foundation of the Society with Miss Le Brun. The ladies were much impressed with what they saw at the Mother-House and one of them, Miss Lily Brewer, assisting at Benediction in the chapel, felt inspired to promise a chalice for the first house of the Helpers which should be set up in America. These ladies were on their way to the Holy Land. On their return, Miss Brewer fell ill and, sadly enough, died in Constantinople. But in her last moments she did not forget the Helpers and, in her will, she made disposition for the chalice, which she had promised in Paris. This token of her kindly sympathy was used, as a matter of fact, at the first Mass that was celebrated in the house of

the Society in New York, and in Heaven the soul of Lily Brewer rejoiced.

These two ladies and the American priest had urged a foundation for New York. "Now or never," they said. Everything was ready. A few months later, in the early days of 1891, fresh and urgent appeals, fortified by the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, came from across the water. The Mother General felt that the time had come, and she decided to send over, to investigate and make final arrangements, a trusted member of her council. This word was received with great joy by the friends of the Society in America, and Mr. and Mrs. Le Brun, the parents of Adèle, hastened graciously to offer the hospitality of their home to the visiting Sisters.

It was on April 24th, 1891, that Mother St. Francis de Sales, Assistant General of the Society, accompanied by Mother of the Presentation, arrived in New York. Their trip across the Atlantic had been made agreeable by some non-Catholic friends who knew the Le Bruns. The letters of the travelers, back to Paris, are cheerful and give many details of the trip, while, during their stay, they reported by letter, for the information of the Mother General and the interest of their Sisters, all that had happened to them.

They met friends in New York, those whom

Miss Le Brun and Father Prendergast and others had interested in their work. They met many Jesuit Fathers, including Father Thomas Campbell, Provincial of the Maryland-New York Province, and Father Hughes, and Father John Young of St. Francis Xavier's, Sixteenth Street. They visited the different convents, and were introduced to the work that the Catholic Sisterhoods were doing in New York. The letters home about all this are interesting, simple and sometimes naïve.

After a few weeks they went South, to visit the great cities of Pennsylvania and Maryland. At Baltimore, they were received with affectionate and delicate hospitality by the Bogue family. They had an audience with His Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, and then went about to look into the Catholic organizations of the city. The Cardinal highly approved of their opening a house in New York, but, before they left the city, the nuns received many and pressing invitations to set up a foundation of their Society likewise in Baltimore. While in this city, they were much amused by the appearance and demeanor of Mr. Bogue's colored coachman. In Washington, they visited the Capital and at Georgetown College they enjoyed the charming hospitality of its Rector, Father Joseph Richards. On their way back to New York, the Helpers stopped off at Philadelphia and called upon Archbishop Ryan.

Returned to New York, Mother St. Francis de Sales made the final arrangements for the definite arrival of a little community of Helpers. True, at Baltimore, a house, chapel and garden were offered, provided they could come to set up a foundation within a few months. But arrangements had already begun for New York, and to open up two foundations in America was, at the time, impossible. So, this magnificent offer had to be declined. Archbishop Corrigan of New York was all enthusiasm. On May 26th, he invited the two Helpers to assist at the benediction of a new monastery of nuns, that had just been completed. Crowds were present, including a number of non-Catholics, and the Helpers made some new friends. At the close of the ceremonies, the Archbishop spoke. He traced the beginnings of the foundation of this monastery and said in part:

"A charitable soul donated the chapel, another, who desires to remain unknown, gave a considerable sum of money, without which it would have been impossible to begin the foundation of the convent. I have learned, just recently, that this money was at first destined to help towards the foundation of a house of another community of Religious in New York. Some of those very Sisters are present, and I hope that, by the grace of God, they too will come to make their home in this city, for their arrival will carry with it many blessings."

The ten thousand dollars mentioned by Father Prendergast, which the Helpers had formerly been obliged to refuse, had been turned over to the convent at which dedication they were now assisting. Later the Archbishop speaking of the Helpers, said warmly to a group of friends: "I want everyone to know, that I desire to see these Religious established in my archdiocese." Adèle Le Brun was overjoyed.

All arrangements were finally made for the coming to New York of the first Community of the Helpers of the Holy Souls. A committee was organized to attend to the details, for procuring a house and for the beginning of the work, so that the following year all would be ready. After a brief visit up into Canada, where they had been pressingly invited, the two Helpers sailed from New York on the Rhineland, June 1st, 1891, and arrived at Antwerp, June 24th. The following letter from Miss Adèle Le Brun to Mère de la Miséricorde, throws much light upon the good results of the visit and marks it as a perfect success.

"Germantown, Philadelphia, U. S. A.
"June 12, 1891.

"VERY REVEREND MOTHER GENERAL,

"When you receive these lines you will be awaiting the arrival of the dear travelers, for they will be near the end of their journey.

"I can never tell you how extremely happy we

were to have them in our home. We esteem it a great privilege to have been thus favored and all, without exception, miss the presence of these amiable Religious in our family circle. It was a great joy for us to see the interest that they showed for all that concerns our dear country, and we look forward, dear Reverend Mother, to the foundation of your Order in the near future. We are all convinced that the time has come for that.

"The Public interest has been aroused by the visit of these worthy Religious and all those who have your interests at heart see but one thing and that is: a Convent of the Helpers of the Holy Souls founded in New York, before the end of the year.

"Our saintly Archbishop spoke of this openly when he gave 'a blessing on the safe return to the Reverend Mother Assistant and her companion. Everyone was struck with the prudence of these Religious, their tact and, if you will allow me to express myself frankly in familiar language with you, . . . their real value. Americans are very practical, and know perfectly how to distinguish and appreciate solid virtue. I am only repeating the general verdict with regard to the dear Mothers you sent us . . . and I thank God for this beginning.

"You will soon hear of our plan of action in all its details from your Religious, besides it is not I who should give them. But my confidence in Divine Providence is so strong, that I am perfectly convinced that the means to accomplish the Will of God, in what concerns it, will not be lacking.

"I am staying here in Germantown for a few days with my Mother. She joins me in forming the most ardent wishes for the realization of our desires. I remain, Reverend Mother," etc.

"ADÈLE LE BRUN."

Things were now rapidly taking shape. The American physician who had seen in prayer the little chapel of Rue Antoinette had carried to Mother St. Bernard a true message, and had brought to her heart the first potent promise of the fulfillment of her desire, for work in distant lands for God. The month after her return to Europe, Mother St. Francis de Sales wrote to Mother St. Bernard: "I should be so happy to see you in New York, dear Mother . . . I will plead with the good God, that the foundation be successfully arranged." On the last day of that year, she wrote again: "Accept all my best wishes for 1892. May this year see the fulfillment of one of my most cherished desires, that it be you who will take the colony of Helpers to New York. Dear Mother, it is wrong, perhaps, for me to desire that you go so far, but it is for God, Our dear Master's glory."

Then after the passing of a few more weeks, there came to Mother St. Bernard another grace and, as we can see it now, another indication of God's watching Providence. In May, she was invited by Mother General to come to Paris to the Mother-House, to join in with the band of other

Religious who were going to make the long retreat of *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, through a period of thirty days. With joy and gladness, the soul of Mother St. Bernard accepted this invitation. It was a precious grace and, as things happened and as many probably suspected, it came on the threshold of a great change in her life and was intended to strengthen her for many labors, soon to be borne for Christ, and to fit her soul for the crosses, and worries, and contradictions those labors would entail.

The soul of Mother St. Bernard, now so well matured and so fit for the generous infusion of the more delicate and potent graces, received, during this retreat, great lights and precious consolations. "Directions for the rest of my life," she said, were, at that time given her by the Heavenly Bridegroom, who was leading her on to closer union with Himself, and up into the more heroic reaches of the spiritual life. It was during these days that Mother St. Bernard felt she could call out with St. Agnes' words of fire: "Behold, what I have desired, I now see, what I have hoped for, I now hold: to Him may I be joined in Heaven, whom on earth I have always loved."

CHAPTER SIXTH.

NEW YORK.

IN spite of her desire to do so, Mère de la Miséricorde could not immediately arrange to send across the ocean those whom she wanted. There were some necessary delays, and it was only in the spring of 1892 that the final arrangements in France could be definitely made. Letters on this subject were passing the Atlantic, and pressing letters from Baltimore, likewise, came asking that a house be established there also, and assuring the Reverend Mother that all would be ready for the Sisters. But after mature deliberation and consultation, it was decided that the Helpers could not, at present, satisfy the desires of the see of Cardinal Gibbons, and that New York, for many reasons, had the first claim to the administrations of the Society.

Meanwhile the Reverend Mother General had chosen a Superior for the little band of Helpers, soon to be sent so far away from their Mother-House. Her choice fell upon Mother St. Bernard, and Mother St. Bernard was ready. Why not? She loved Christ, that was sufficient. On May 5,

she knew definitely, that she was to be Superior of the new house in New York. Her journal says: "Mother spoke to me again about America and added: 'That means that you are going! . . . It breaks my heart when I think of the sufferings that you will have to endure.' Then, she spoke to me of the foundation that she had made in London, and of the difficulties that she had met with. 'You must go slowly,' she said, 'work among the sick—conversions—no meetings for a while.' "

If we look into the soul of Mother St. Bernard, during the weeks that she was preparing for her departure, we shall see that phenomenon, which is classic with all generous souls, who, for the love of Christ, have offered themselves for difficult enterprises. We shall see spiritual joy and solid happiness; but because these souls are human and have human hearts and human feelings, we shall see that they are poignarded with pain, because of impending separation from those they love. Still they are strengthened and sustained by that full union with Him through whom all their loves on earth have been sanctified. There is pain and joy of soul so commingled, that it is impossible to say whether the joy of suffering for Christ and the sweetness of it, is greater than the actual stabs of heart and soul which this very suffering entails. What we see intensified, therefore, in a Teresa of Avila or even in a Little Flower, we witness also now, in the heart of

Mother St. Bernard about to give up all she loves most tenderly on earth, to go into strange and distant lands in order to labor for Christ.

It was not only the tenderness of her womanly heart, that we now behold so acutely and tremblingly alive to these sharp incisions, but it was her French woman's heart that was being cut and gashed. Only those who know the delicacy of French affection, and the acuteness of the suffering which these separations are capable of producing, can begin to appreciate the nature of the crisis which Mother St. Bernard was passing through. It was not only from her family, that she was being torn away, but also from her Religious Sisters and from her Mother in Christ, Mère de la Miséricorde for whom she had a daughter's affection. She had suffered intensely from her first separation from her family; she was going through all this again. She felt as if she were never again going to see them on earth.

Yet Mother St. Bernard was stronger now to endure these sufferings. The love of God had sprung up in the garden of her soul like a strong and beautiful tree. The thought that she was doing all this for Christ, her Eternal Spouse, sweetened the bitterness of the gall, and at times flooded her soul with rivers of happiness. So do we see again and for the hundredth time in the heart of this servant of God that "love is stronger than death."

A glance at Mother St. Bernard's diary, will bring out the truth of all that has been set down above. She writes for May 7th:

"It was on May 5th that my good Master gave me the answer to my questions: to do His Will and only that. I felt both joy and sorrow in my soul . . . Something that God put there for the missions rejoiced, but I was broken up at the thought of the sacrifices. O my Lord Jesus, I give You all that I have that is dearest to me! Be pleased to accept it, and give me in return all that is necessary to do that work You have entrusted to me. I give myself to You. In two weeks time from this hour I shall be separated from my beloved Mother and from my dear ones on earth . . . for Jesus only."

On May 14 she writes:

"My dear good Mother (Mère de la Miséricorde), on seeing the pain I suffer in leaving her, said to me: 'Poor child, life is nothing but suffering!' "

And then on May 20th:

"This is the last day spent with Mother . . . I have seen all, understood all, accepted all. . . . My dear good Mother made another remark to me on obedience, for the care of my health. She had been so good and affectionate . . . She wanted to make the separation easier . . . But nothing can do that . . . I do not know if we shall ever see each other again on this earth. The sacrifice breaks my heart, but it is for my beloved Lord."

Mother St. Bernard embarked at Havre, on the French liner, "La Champagne," on May 21st, 1892. She was the head of a little band of seven, composing three choir nuns and three Sisters. Three of these six were French, two were English and one was Irish. The voyage was peacefully accomplished; there were no incidents. They arrived in New York harbor, May 29th, at seven o'clock, in the morning of a glorious day. The water was as smooth as a lake and the sun gilded one side of the great ship, as it turned north to slip into its dock off the Hudson. They were not able to land, however, until nine-thirty.

The loyal Adèle Le Brun was there, to receive them with open arms. She led them immediately into St. Veronica's Church nearby, where they were able to hear Mass, after which they were escorted to the dwelling that was to be their immediate home in the city of New York. The next day, a letter, all radiant with happiness, was written back to France to their dearest Mother.

"How I should like to send you the joy of all our hearts and the emotions we experienced in landing on this long-desired shore! . . . It was truly the good Jesus Himself who waited for us with outstretched arms and open heart, leading us in triumph to this charming little house, where He had, as formerly for His Apostles, prepared a delicious honeycomb . . . The excellent Miss Le Brun was waiting already two hours at the dock. . . . She wept for joy on kissing us, and

received us as long-desired sisters much beloved. It would be impossible for me to express to you the foresight, delicacy and affectionate sympathy, which all this dear family have shown to us. . . . The officials were most obliging. But the dear Lord goes to extremes in His goodness.

"After passing through the Custom House, we started off in the lead of Miss Le Brun, so radiant and happy. A few minutes' walk took us to a church just at the moment when the priest was ascending the altar for Mass, and when the children were singing a hymn to the Blessed Virgin. At the end of each verse was the refrain: 'I give you my heart!' . . . Two empty pews in the first row, seemed to have been left on purpose for us, and we had, at last, the happiness of finding in the Tabernacle the gentle Jesus, who in reality had never left us. . . . Miss Le Brun then took us to 25 Seventh Avenue, where her mother, Miss Margaret M. and Miss P. were waiting for us. But I will not describe today that charming little sanctuary, which was and still is, the witness of so many touching scenes. . . . Another letter will give you the details, but I must tell you at once, so that you may thank the good Master with us, that we are loaded with marks of His divine Providence, all having been prepared by our friends, with a delicacy which prints in letters of fire the name of JESUS on the walls of our 'Home, sweet home.' . . . There is a little red lamp burning on the staircase at the foot of a picture of Our Lady of Providence, Queen of Purgatory. There were flowers and holy water . . . To speak of the material side . . . all was supplied for the first meals of our little Community."

Evidently, sacrifice for Christ has its compensations, and those who have gone through the pains of the former know how deep and pure are the joys of the latter. Soon loving letters came in from the hearts that they had left. The Reverend Mother General wrote: "May the Divine Spirit and His gifts cover you with His refreshing shadow. Your house is waiting for the coming of the Divine Presence of your Lord. But patience, He will soon be with you . . . If only we could give the whole world to Our Lord, winning it over to His love!"

And there was a very wonderful letter written from Liège, by Père Henry, S.J., of Collège St. Servais, who had known there, for some time, Mother St. Bernard and understood the value of her soul. The letter was written before the departure from France. It shows the regrets of the many whom Mother St. Bernard had left behind her, and it explains the support which she had in her soul, during these first days in a strange city, at the remembrance of so much regard and at the thought of so many prayers.

"Reverend Mother,

"Allow me to express to you my sincere regrets at your departure from Liège. I am deeply grieved, and it will be only with profound regret that I shall think of you on the twenty-first, the day of your definite departure for a new world.

I shall accompany you with my prayers and I shall never forget you.

"If the determination of your Reverend Mother General has a painful aspect for you and for us, it is on the other hand glorious for you and promises a rich harvest of merits. It proves also, the esteem and confidence with which your Mother General honors you, for the undertaking is not easy and could be entrusted only to very sure hands. . . .

"In going far away from all those whom you have loved, you do not go away from God. Your union with Him will become more intimate, more familiar. Thence you will always draw strength and consolation, and you will also find the light to solve your doubts and uncertainties. Serve Him always with a large and generous heart. May your desire of being faithful to Him in all things, even in the least detail, never cause you anxiety, nor even timidity. For your happiness and that of your community, be always joyful. . . . You will thus prepare a large place for all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

"On the twenty-first, I will offer the Holy Sacrifice for you and those who are to accompany you . . .What a joy this event will be for your dear Souls in Purgatory. May their joy console you and make your sacrifice easier to bear.

"Accept, Reverend Mother, the expression of my religious devotion and the promise of my faithful souvenir in Our Lord,

"J. HENRY, S.J."

Shortly after their arrival in their new home the Helpers were greatly amused. "Think of it,"

one of them wrote back to France, "the first man who called on us, after our arrival at our new home, was a colored gentleman. A charming individual . . . janitor of the owner. He showed us how to make the kitchen fire."

The house is thus described in a letter by one of the Helpers: "It is narrow and very high, which makes the rooms very high also, especially on the ground floor where the chapel is. The windows are very narrow, but high, extending from the floor to the ceiling. The outside is red brick and the windows have green shutters, the green of the Swiss chalets. Inside there are also dark green blinds. The door is at the left of the house and is reached by eight steps. A little grating from the entrance separates the house from the sidewalk and forms a tiny yard. A few steps down is the basement where the tradesmen enter, and where we receive by the refectory window, catalogues, advertisements, invitations to meetings, etc., at almost every meal. It is there that St. Joseph had, this morning, left a bottle of milk for us . . . Good St. Joseph! he must be very sad at our worries over the Custom House, and must be trying to make them easier to bear! . . . But enter the house where the good God does not yet dwell and tell us what you think of these pretty mat carpets to be seen everywhere! . . . Gas everywhere too, as well as hot and cold water. All that depended on our friends has been

First Chapel of the Helpers of the Holy Souls in the United States, 25 Seventh Ave., New York.

attended to with a delicacy, and a devotedness truly touching. We go each morning to the church of the Jesuits. Although a little tired from the journey, everyone is well; and as our big cases are still at the Custom House, we are obliged to rest. . . . It is very hot! !"

These last lines refer to the sacrifices which the Helpers had at first to put up with. The hardest was the absence of the Blessed Sacrament. They could not yet have Mass in their own home, nor enjoy those visits to their Lord present in the Tabernacle, which are so great a consolation and support to Religious. The house had first to be blessed and dedicated by Archbishop Corrigan before they would be able to enjoy the presence of their Lord. The day of the blessing finally came, and the Archbishop was happy to perform the ceremony. A goodly number of guests were present, including a number of the clergy. After the blessing, the house was thrown open to visitors for inspection.

The next morning the Helpers had the joy they had long awaited. At 6:30, on the morning of June 13th, the Community bell was rung for the first Mass. They went down into a chapel bright with flowers which had been brought by some of the ladies the previous day. Father Wucher, Provincial of the Fathers of Mercy, arrived in good time and a group of friends and well-wishers had come. Everything had been ar-

ranged for Father Wucher in the sacristy with that refreshing and cleanly neatness so characteristic of Religious women. Father made ready before Mass to bless the vestments, the altar linen and the little Tabernacle, where the Guardian of the house was to dwell. When Mass finally began the congregation wept and Father Wucher was visibly affected. He expressed his happiness after Mass to Mother St. Bernard, and said he would return in the afternoon for Benediction.

Mother St. Bernard, as we can well imagine, was overjoyed. That very day she wrote to the Mother General:

"VERY REVEREND MOTHER:

"At last we possess our Divine Master! . . . Did not your Guardian Angel tell you this yesterday, when at 6:30 the bell rang for our first Mass? I begged mine most earnestly, to go and carry this good news to you and to tell you that we were expecting Our dear Lord. For twenty-three days we had no Community Mass . . . How long the time seemed! . . . Now with Our Lord, we have all joy and strength. What a solemn moment it was, when He came to take possession of this new sanctuary! . . . I adored Jesus, our Jesus in this dear little chapel, for you . . . for all the Society; and it seemed to me that all Heaven was rejoicing and that in Purgatory the flames were less ardent, that our dear souls blessed God for having opened a new source from which living waters could flow for their

refreshment. It was on Thursday morning that we began to organize the chapel, as our letter of Friday last told you . . . and with what joy! . . . One must have gone through it, to be able to understand it; one must have experienced the privation of the Blessed Sacrament."

In the meantime the chests and baggage of the Helpers had arrived from the Customs, after many formalities and the payment of a hundred and twenty-five dollars duty. Then the labor of unpacking was taken in hand and one of the letters back to the Mother-House, describes with a good deal of fun and humor the rush which each one made for the articles she thought belonged to her department. The sacristan, the infirmarian, the cook, even before the parcels could be opened, made a dash for what they thought belonged to them. Upon unwrapping, there were some disillusionments and certain things had to change hands. Although all had been so wonderfully arranged for the Helpers by the committee in charge, even to the installation of an electric system for door-bells, etc., which for that date was quite a luxury and delighted them greatly, still there were some final touches that had to be made under the direct supervision of the Helpers themselves. A booth and confessional had to be fixed up. The little organ which they had shipped all the way from France had traveled on its head,

one of them said, and upon its arrival would not speak a note. This had to be repaired.

Finally everything was fixed and settled; all the workmen went away and all the dirt and disorder of unpacking and repairing cleaned well out of the little house on Seventh Avenue. The Helpers of the Holy Souls were now ready to begin that apostolic work for which they crossed the wide Atlantic: charitable administrations to the poor and spiritual instruction to all who should apply to them.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

APOSTLES IN NEW YORK.

THE little band of Helpers of the Holy Souls, as the French liner "La Champagne" slipped into New York harbor and slid silently by the statue of Liberty, did not look across upon that same wondrous skyline of New York which today amazes the stranger first coming to the shores of the United States. Such structures as the Woolworth Building and the Equitable Life did not, in 1892, block off and zigzag the horizon to the northwest in lofty towers and great high squares. Still, skyscrapers there were, even in 1892, for ever since the late seventies, when the first frame steel structure proved a success, New York had been continuously reaching towards the sky.

The Helpers, after some acquaintance with things, were impressed with the magnitude of the city and their apostolic hearts glowed with satisfaction, as they thought of the hundreds of thousands of souls who were awaiting their administrations. Officially, and on paper, the city was not one half what it is now. True, on January 1st,

1874, the south end of Westchester County was annexed, but it was not until 1895 that the northern portion of the county came into the city, and the five-borough Greater New York came into being only on the first of January, 1898, through the annexation of Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens. Nevertheless, New York in 1892 was almost as much a physical unit with Brooklyn and with Queens as it is today; and although the Bronx was not then the busy bustling city it has since become, the ferries were carrying thousands across from Jersey City, and the trains brought thousands down from the northern counties. The Helpers had entered a city practically as large as London or Paris.

The house they were going to occupy was situated in a quiet part of lower Seventh Avenue and in a neighborhood which beckoned to them as apostles. A Unitarian chapel was to the right, to the left a Presbyterian church. Across the street was a row of neat wooden cottages, set off in front by beds of flowers, "a rare thing in this great city." But at each corner of the avenue were crowded tenements with their tier upon tier of human occupants. If the Helpers would not convert everybody who would come to the Unitarian and Presbyterian churches, which flanked their abode, into these tenement quarters, at least, and among the poor generally, they would introduce the comfort of their kindly administra-

tions and the sunshine of their quiet courtesy and kindness.

A rush of work did not immediately begin, however. The newcomers had to know the city just a little, and the city had to know something about them. Just before leaving France, Mother St. Bernard had been advised by the Mother General, not to begin immediately to organize her sodalities and clubs of reunions. This was only according to the dictates of prudence. But the work of private instruction, of visiting the sick and the poor, this could be begun now at any time. Miss Adèle Le Brun and other ladies would speak of them; Father Prendergast, Father Young, Father Van Rensselaer and other friends among the clergy would talk of them to the members of their flocks; they would soon become known. But what helped a great deal was an article, which appeared in a Catholic journal, for the issue of June 19, which introduced the Helpers to the public of the city, and gave some interesting details of their installation.

"After ten years of waiting," said the article, "New York has finally taken unto itself, a Community of the Helpers of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. They have come to carry on their beautiful work in behalf of those who suffer on earth, and in spiritual help for those who have departed." The writer gave a brief description of their

home and a survey of the work that they were ready to do.

However, as souls did not come streaming to their house immediately, Mother St. Bernard said one evening to the Community in recreation: "We shall have to beg the Sacred Heart to send us souls to instruct. Let us make a novena of sacrifices for that intention." They then went down to the chapel for evening prayers. Soon the doorbell rang. It was a young girl who had been sent to the house by the Jesuit Fathers of St. Francis Xavier's. She handed Mother St. Bernard a note from Father Van Rensselaer. She was a High Church Episcopalian, and Father had sent her to be prepared for her reception into the Catholic Church. Mother St. Bernard and the Community were overjoyed at this speedy answer to their prayers. Others soon followed and the Helpers had not to wait long for souls to lead nearer to Christ.

It was soon to come, that time when the sodalities and clubs could be organized, when the little Community could begin to reach out thus to the children of their vicinity and to the ladies of the city. First Communion classes were started, a group of Children of Mary, a St. Agnes' Club and, for the ladies, the meeting of Our Lady of Mercy. All the days were soon assigned to different tasks. A group of young girls came every evening, from 6:30 to 8 o'clock. Monday and

Thursday in the afternoon catechism was taught. On Thursdays a library, that Mother St. Bernard had been forming, was opened for the young people to borrow books from, if they so desired. On Tuesday sewing classes were held for the girls. Wednesday they had singing lessons, carried out according to the competent methods advised by Father Young, S. J., choir director of St. Francis Xavier's. On Fridays there was again exercise in sewing and, at the same time, some sort of profitable reading for the children.

Then there was the beginning of the work of visiting the sick and the poor. The Religious ventured out timidly at first, strangers and foreigners in a large and bustling city. All was new to them; all is so "other-world like," one of them wrote. There is frequent mention of the elevated railway which, at first, so interested them. They were in these days saved the crush of the subways, for the first underground began operation only in October, 1904. "Our steps are still a little timid," one of the Helpers wrote the month after their arrival, "and the distances covered are not too great. If some of the homes are too far away, then we do not go there every day, because we are too few. It was on Wednesday, June 15th, that our first visits to the sick were made. . . . With what delight did we not respond to the call!"

Here is where the Helpers came in touch with

poverty and suffering, brought consolation into desolate dwellings, and sunshine into gloomy rooms and corners. The address of an old and sick Alsatian, whose confession he had just heard, was given the Helpers by their chaplain. "She was to receive Holy Communion on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and we went to the poor hovel after Mass. . . . The good old soul, a poor widow of seventy-one, lived with her two sons." One son was deaf, suffered from an impediment in his speech and from many other ills. The only support of this family came from the other son who labored at laundry work. Their home was in reality an old shanty of planks, set up at the bottom of a damp little yard. The sick woman, stretched on her little low bed, was without even the convenience of sheets. But the Helpers came like ministering angels. They tidied up the whole place, brought clean fresh sheets for the poor woman, introduced the cheerfulness and the perfume of flowers, and set the little room off with a white, new table-spread and some clean towels. Then, for the morning of Communion a tiny altar was set up with candles, and everything was made ready for the coming of Our Lord. Next morning, at the appointed time, Father came, just when the Helpers had put the last touches to their preparation. The poor woman received thus her Lord and her King from the hands of one of His priests, and

in the presence of some of His ministering angels. Repeated visits meant a continuance of happiness and comfort to the poor woman.

This is only one example out of hundreds of the kind of work Mother St. Bernard and her little Community began to do, for the sick and the poor of New York. Later when the Helpers were to move out to Eighty-sixth Street, they would go into the very poorest tenements and into the alleys and hovels occupied by the Negroes of the East Side. Into these dark places they would carry their light and their consolation.

A call came to them from Blackwell's Island and two of the Religious responded. They crossed by East River; the ferryman would take no fare from them. It was evident they were in New York! Father Schleuter, S.J., the chaplain, had called for them and, upon their arrival, he gave them a list of the sick and of those who needed instruction. These visits were repeated, but eventually, it was decided that prison work was not to be for the Helpers of New York and they discontinued going, but Mother St. Bernard arranged that the Helpers visit the Hospital and Home for Colored Incurables. Here at first they had to suffer a good deal of unpleasantness from the stiffness of certain officials not of the Catholic Faith, but the sweetness and the tact of the visitors overcame all obstacles and their work went

on apace. Then in turn came visits to Bellevue Hospital, to the German Hospital, to the Italian. First results in each of these places were consoling, and the administration of the Helpers continued.

So much for the beginning of the Helpers' wonderfully successful work in the great American city, into which they had come as perfect strangers. But what of the inner life of the little Community, of the Superiorship of Mother St. Bernard, which was sure to be filled with these cares and worries that the direction of newly organized activities inevitably brings?

The little Community suffered. First there was the New York summer heat. June was the first month of their residence in the city, and the beginning of the hot days. The Helpers were not used to the humidity of the Eastern summers and their dress was, they soon came to realize, much too heavy for such summer climate. Mother St. Bernard feared some of her charges might fall sick, and, at the end of that first month, she herself became ill and had to take to her bed. But it was not for long and the enforced rest probably helped her.

The advisability of the Religious spending a few weeks out of the hot city was then realized, and a kind benefactress offered them a charming little summer home pleasantly located in Tuckahoe, New York, and since known as

"The Helpers' Retreat." There, amid open spaces, and the fresh air New York City cannot afford, the members of the Community annually enjoy a short sojourn in order to return spiritually and physically invigorated to the kind mothering of countless little folk and older in vast Manhattan.

In the meantime Mother St. Bernard kept receiving from Mère de la Miséricorde, the most consoling and beautiful letters, messages from one who understood, whose intelligent advice was a reassurance in responsibilities, and whose spiritual encouragement was a consolation amid trials.

And other trials there were also. It was not only heat and an attack of sickness, but it was poverty too. True, devoted friends like Miss Adèle Le Brun and Miss Anna Cronise were wonderful in their generosity, and in the delicate solicitude with which they had sent up to the little home on Seventh Avenue, now this object, now that. One day it would be a desk for the room of Mother Superior, another day it is a prie-dieu for the chapel. But the Community had to be supported, and delicacy did not always allow the mention of every difficulty and need to friends who had, already, been so bounteously generous. Often during these first days, and even months, food was short in the house. One of the Helpers even tried her hand at begging from

door to door. But they had to learn by many a humiliating experience that this cannot be done in America, and the good Religious reaped much spiritual fruit of humility. There is a brief but eloquent entry in the diary for June 20th: "We have no bread."

It was in such trying circumstances that the faith of Mother St. Bernard shone out in all its luster. In these near-heroic days of the new foundation, the little Community, under the leadership of their Mother, would storm Heaven in that simple way that the children of God know of. Notes were written to St. Joseph by the Mother Superior, laying before him all the various needs of the house. It was not only bread!—A new and unexpected trial came upon them. They soon found out that the house in which they were, was unfitted for them; old, too hot in summer, leaky in winter. It was from the first, to have been only temporary.

So, we find this note of Mother St. Bernard addressed to St. Joseph: "Good St. Joseph, we are in great distress! I beg you to find the house or the ground where Divine Providence wishes us to settle. I depend so much on you! You have been so good to your poor little servant! Be pleased to show me that my confidence is gratifying to you, and do not let this month pass by without your tendering us your assistance. In the name of your worries at Nazareth, do not refuse

to hear me." Another note read: "St. Joseph, I beg you to send us some bread. You are so kind that you will surely give us some. You suffered, at Nazareth, anxieties in order to feed the Holy Family. I unite my anguish to yours and I trust in your help." And again: "Good St. Joseph, our great provider, come to our assistance. I have no bread for the Community for this month, will you let me ask in vain? I promise to erect a statue in your honor if you show me that it is pleasing to you! Good St. Joseph, come to our assistance!" There are many other simple and childlike manifestations such as these. Since Mother St. Bernard was familiar with the things of Heaven, why should she not speak familiarly to the saints? She asks not only for the finding of a permanent site and for money to pay the bills, but even for little objects for the chapel: statues, paintings, a prie-dieu. And what is interesting is this: on each note had been written, in triumphant characters, "GRANTED."

Even after their removal, in 1894, to their new and permanent site, at 114 East 86th Street, their financial worries still continued. There is a little story about their first winter at Eighty-sixth Street and their difficulty in procuring coal. It may be set down here, in the simple narrative of one of the Helpers:

"In spite of the generosity of their benefactors, they had to live from day to day, for all the

assistance coming from France was absorbed by the expenses of the installation. One day, the Sister-cook announced that the coal was almost run out. This was sad news for Mother St. Bernard, who had no money to renew the provision. 'This concerns St. Joseph, Sister,' said Mother St. Bernard, 'he will provide . . . Go on using it with confidence, you will always find enough for the stove.' A little statue of the good Saint was placed above the diminished heap of coal. The Sister obeyed. On entering the cellar each day, she thought she had taken up the last bit of coal, but each day she found, on returning, that a little pile was still there, enough for the needs of the day. This continued for a few weeks, said an eye-witness of the fact. At last Providence sent means for the necessary expense, and Mother St. Bernard decided to renew the supply by ordinary means, and ordered coal, saying quietly, 'As we have now money to buy coal, we must not tempt Providence.' "

The arm of God is not shortened!

After two years then, the Helpers of the Holy Souls moved out to East Eighty-sixth Street, which was destined to be their permanent home in New York. They were becoming well known in the city. Soon, hundreds of children were coming to their catechism classes, and the different clubs and sodalities were being better and better attended. Series of spiritual conferences, for society ladies and young girls, had been inaugurated and were being very encouragingly at-

Chapel—Present New York Convent,
112 East 86th Street.

tended. They had been started already at the old residence. These were the ladies who came to be of so great assistance to the Helpers, whenever any particular help was needed. A bazaar was held to cover part of the expenses of moving, and it was chiefly these ladies who helped make it a success. In connection with the conferences and the other activities the names of many of the Jesuit Fathers appear. Among others recur the names of Fathers William Pardow, Edward Spillane, John Young, John Prendergast, Thomas Campbell, and Henry Van Rensselaer, all of them, then and since, so well known for the success of their different lines of activity.

No wonder the little seed of good which the Helpers of the Holy Souls had begun to sow in New York at the time of their arrival had sprouted, matured and multiplied. The blessing of Heaven was with them, and the goodness of these Religious, headed by the deep and genuine spirituality of their Mother Superior, won from Heaven a continuous stream of fruitful graces. Twice during her stay in New York, Mother St. Bernard had been called to Europe. One aspect of these voyages must have been a source of joy and consolation to her, for she would again, contrary to the prospects that saddened her on leaving France, enjoy and profit by the spoken advice of Mère de la Miséricorde. The first absence was from June to October, 1899. Her sec-

ond trip was made to re-elect Mère de la Miséricorde, in a general congregation of the Society. This effected her absence from New York from December, 1900, to April, 1901. We have no details of these journeys.

A few months before Mother St. Bernard's second sailing, a great sorrow came upon her. She received word by letter of the decease of her saintly mother, who went to her Lord fortified by all the rites of the Church.

During all these years, Mother St. Bernard kept up a frequent and continuous correspondence with the Mother General. These letters give us as excellent an example of intimate and affectionate relations between Superior and subject as we could well hope to find.

In October, 1893, Mother St. Bernard writes a very touching letter to her Mother General, which discovers the intense desire of a candid and spiritual soul, to lay itself entirely open before the one who takes for her the place of God. All her worries, all her humiliations, here find comment. The recognition of passed graces, the fear that correspondence to further favors has not been sufficiently generous. There is the humble acknowledgment of advice and even of admonition given her in the past, and there is the sincere request that the same salutary medicines again be administered. By the responsibilities, incident to the founding of the New York house,

and by the subsequent press of work and worry, the interior life of Mother St. Bernard had been somewhat disturbed. She finds herself distracted now, as she was not wont to be at prayer. That intimate, and ardent, and abiding consciousness of union with Christ was no longer what it used to be.

Surely this soul needs encouragement; she must be sustained in her labors and difficulties; her confidence in God must be strengthened. Rightly does Reverend Mother General indicate the cause of trouble; prudently and efficiently, and with infinite kindness does she administer the needed advice. "This state, dear daughter, comes from the fact that, having undertaken more than you could peacefully manage, your spirit finds itself encumbered with difficulties against which you must fight. This effect is brought about also from physical weakness . . . the result of overwork . . . In all things look to moderation. Lay aside that which is too intense and pressing, and shun all that is extreme . . . Apply yourself to consoling thoughts and to those that can encourage." Thus did the wise and loving Mother direct and console her anxious daughter.

As we know from her younger days, one of the great crosses of Mother St. Bernard's spiritual life was its inclination to scrupulousness and excessive timidity. She is now passing through the same experience again. A few months later, her

letters show her as having fallen into the suffering depths of a real and dark desolation. She asks for help, for prayers, for consolation, for advice. The Mother General sends her just what is needed, and responds again with kindness, but not unmixed, this time, with words of gentle censure. These indeed are trials, but they are golden trials, which offer us the occasion of the practice of humility. How often Mother St. Bernard had asked for humiliations, so that she might more resemble her Lord. Now they have come. Let her lift up her soul in gratitude for this response to her desires. To strengthen herself, and to settle her soul in its former calm and solid peace, Mother St. Bernard made a vow, February 11th, 1894, the anniversary of her final Vows, pronounced at Paris, "not to look for anything, anywhere, except the accomplishment of the Divine Will."

Thus did the serene and gentle exterior of Mother St. Bernard, head and inspirer of all the work the Helpers were doing for the people in New York, draw itself over an inner life which was, sometimes, tried by stress and storm. But the Mother was too diffident of self,—a saintly and holy weakness! Her love of God was running as strong as ever it was, and stronger even with the years. Every fiber of her heart was entwined, affectionately and ardently, about the

person of her God. Christ was her life; it was the ardor of her woman's love for Him which sustained her in every labor, and carried her through every trial and disappointment.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

ST. LOUIS.

IN 1903, the Helpers of the Holy Souls founded in St. Louis the second house of their Society in America. It was done under the leadership of Mother St. Bernard. Baltimore, as we have seen, had put in a strong bid for the Helpers; Chicago, Cincinnati and other cities had asked for them. But it was decided that St. Louis should come before any of these other places. The circumstances of the new foundation follow.

There were friends of the Helpers in St. Louis who desired very much to have them there, and promised them a fruitful field of labor. Mother St. Bernard had been approached and she showed herself willing to begin a foundation in the great city of the Middle West, could satisfactory arrangements be made. The Archbishop of St. Louis, the Most Reverend John J. Kain, gave his hearty approbation to the project and on May 4th, 1903, Mother St. Bernard left New York with a companion for a preliminary visit to the city, to inspect the new field of work and close the final arrangements. The results of this visit

were communicated to the Reverened Mother General at Paris and everything met with her approval.

No time was lost. Before the month was out the Religious about to form the little nucleus of the St. Louis foundation, were ready to leave New York. The date of their departure was fixed for May 29th. Four Mothers and two Sisters made the journey with Mother St. Bernard. Before leaving the house at Eighty-sixth Street the little group, accompanied by those they were leaving, made a visit to their Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. They thanked Him for the graces He had granted them during their years of labor in the city, they asked His blessing on the new work they were about to undertake, and they offered up to Him the pain they felt in leaving a spot and companions they had come to love. They left on Thursday morning. The trip took thirty-one hours, and the train pulled into St. Louis on the evening of the next day at seven o'clock.

Miss Maffitt and Miss Berthold met them at the station, "with a warmth, delicacy and affection" which deeply impressed them. The Helpers were taken by carriage to the Hospital of St. John, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, where they were to spend their first night in St. Louis. These details had been arranged at the very last moment; for the ladies in charge had fixed up the

house that was to be their abode, but the night before, so much had been stolen from it, that the Helpers could not have lodged there without much inconvenience.

The Sisters of Mercy were hospitality itself. Everything was ready for them and had been arranged with complete and delicate appointment. The Helpers had not dined on the train, but at a hospital food is always ready, and the little band were able to enjoy a refreshing meal. Then, they were shown to their rooms. The Sisters of Mercy were very much interested, and as we may well surmise, not a little curious, for the two ladies who had arranged for this hospitality, out of a feeling of deference to the possible desires of Mother St. Bernard, had not told the hospital Sisters who the new arrivals were, nor where they had come from. These Sisters of Mercy had never before set eyes upon a Helper of the Holy Souls. The habit of the Helpers was entirely new and strange to them, of a different type from any nuns' uniform they had hitherto seen. "You look like widows," said one. And they saw that these strange nuns, some of whom spoke with a delightful French accent, had not parted from their hair. And so, many moments of cheerful and laughing conversation were enjoyed, in the course of which the Sisters of Mercy had the pleasure of satisfying their sisterly curiosity.

The next morning the Helpers were delighted

to have Mass at six, said by the chaplain, Father Conway. A most agreeable surprise to them was the Benediction which followed. After breakfast, four of the little group were conducted by the maid of one of the ladies to the house at 3887 Delmar Avenue, which was temporarily to be their home. But Mother St. Bernard went off with her companion, to look for beds and a few of the most indispensable things needed for the passing of that night in their new abode. The miserable theft of two nights previously really put the Religious, and especially poor Mother St. Bernard, who had to carry the chief worry and responsibility of all the trouble, to very great inconvenience. However, the account of this installation, written by one of the Helpers, is lighthearted enough. The beds were picked out by Mother St. Bernard,—modest iron ones, according to the spirit of poverty,—but lo and behold, a strike of the teamsters was on, and it was a question whether they would be delivered that day or not. It was Saturday and the Community had visions of sleeping on the floor until Monday. But a good Catholic gentleman came to their rescue, and charged himself with getting the beds out to Delmar Avenue before evening.

The Helpers were greatly pleased with their new home and its surroundings: the chronicler is enthusiastic. She remarks on the space for garden or lawn between each of the houses on this street,

so different from Paris and even from New York, and she descants merrily on the trees that line both sides of the avenue, and on the strips of turf that separate the sidewalk from both sides of the street "making everything so fresh and restful to the eye." This was the house visited and selected by Mother St. Bernard during her visit at the early part of the month, but it was then, as far as the interior was concerned, in a very miserable condition.

A young lady of slender means, whose name, unfortunately, we are not able to obtain, charged herself with the expense and the responsibility of having it thoroughly cleaned, and freshly painted, and she saw to the curtains and other appointments. This was to be, she said, "her labor of love." Mother St. Bernard was delighted with the transformation which had taken place within so short a time, and with joy and gladness she showed her little Community over the house and about the premises. The next day, May 31st, was, that year, the feast of Pentecost and the Helpers were glad to be able to go for Mass over to the Jesuit church of St. Francis Xavier. In the afternoon friends took them to see the Archbishop and to visit the convent of the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

The little Community was glad with the coming of Monday, when they could be about collecting the most indispensable articles for the imme-

Chapel—Present St. Louis Convent, 4012 Washington Blvd.

diate needs of their little home, for, on account of the theft, and because their baggage had not yet arrived, they had these first two nights not much more than beds, in the way of furniture, and their meals partook of much the nature of a picnic. Ham seems to have been one of the staples. The first thing on Monday morning they went down to the 'Bon Marché' and were excellently received. They were already known at the store; the managers had heard of them. Besides, their arrival had already been announced by the daily papers. "So, you are the new Sisters, those that have come from France? The papers have spoken of your coming. Welcome to St. Louis!"—Thus was Mother St. Bernard made to feel at home, and the management made very substantial price reductions, in favor of the "new Sisters from France."

The press continued to write up the Helpers. Reporters came to the house, even a photographer. One reporter, sent by the *Star,* wanted to know the name of the cloak the Sisters wore when they left the house, and what in general their habit signified. One supposes it had a mystic or emblematic sense. He was surprised when the Helpers told him they did not want publicity. Another paper described the poor Helpers very minutely, even to the details of their bonnets and headdress. The result of all this was soon seen in ways as interesting as comical. Women of dif-

ferent types began calling on the Helpers. "I hear you make baby-clothes," said one. "I saw by the papers," said another, "that you give lessons in sewing, designing, in French." In short, the town seems to have become quite excited over the new arrivals and soon came, generally, to refer to them as the "new Sisters."

Here again, as in New York, the Helpers had to wait for quite some time until the Blessed Sacrament could be kept in the part of the house that had been made into a chapel. It was not until June 26th that the first Mass was said in their home and that the Religious were made finally and completely happy. Father Burke, S.J., was assigned to them as chaplain and came at the above date, at six in the morning, to bless the chapel, after which Mass was said. The chapel is described as having been very beautifully decorated for this great event, and many ladies of the city, friends and well-wishers of the Helpers, were present.

It was with Bishop Glennon, that Mother St. Bernard had made arrangements about the chapel and the chaplain. Archbishop Kain was taken seriously ill shortly before the arrival of the Helpers, so that his then Coadjutor, the present Archbishop John J. Glennon, was taking active charge of the diocese. Mother explained to the amiable Bishop all the details of their work and of their coming to the city. When his Lordship

heard that one of the Helpers' works was to care for the sick poor, he asked, "Even the sick colored people?" He was delighted with Mother's enthusiastic reply in the affirmative. Of his own accord, the Bishop suggested a Jesuit chaplain as that could conform better with their 'ordo' for Mass, and though they were not in the Jesuit parish, they were, he said, on the edge of it. Mother St. Bernard was charmed by this kindly provision and by the Bishop's interpretation of her desires.

Others were kind to the Helpers too. A lawyer, who had been a judge in New Mexico, offered them his services in any business or legal questions that might need attention, and a Catholic physician came to place himself at their disposal, should the Helpers, at any time, require the services of his profession. "What a blessing you are to the city!" said one of the ladies about this time to Mother St. Bernard, "there is no one here who is engaged in your kind of work." All this was consoling, and the hearts of the new arrivals must have been deeply gratified.

Gradually, then, after the settling down of the Helpers, their different activities and administrations, as had happened in New York, began to take hold and to increase. Visits among the poor sick colored folk, as well as work among the colored children soon began. A sewing class was started at the Italian church. The different groups

of children and of women were organized, sermons and instructions were given them on appointed days, by different members of the clergy of the city. The Jesuits of St. Louis University particularly were a great help to the Religious. Father William Hornsby had been in China and had known there the work of the Helpers. He spoke most consolingly to them and gave spiritual conferences to the ladies.

The works for God's poor began to bear fruit. On the April after their arrival an old negress was baptized on her deathbed. The following September a Free Mason was converted, and an old woman of seventy-six was brought back into the Fold, after having been separated since the days of her first Holy Communion. On All Souls Day, 1904, Archbishop Glennon himself came to preach to the Religious and to a group of Catholic ladies. A few days later, the Rev. Joseph Grimmelsman, Provincial of the Missouri Province of the Jesuits, accompanied by a French nobleman, the Prince de Croy, paid a visit to the Helpers. In spite of the rain, the chapel was full. The Father Provincial preached a beautiful sermon.

In the spring of 1904, Mother St. Bernard fell ill and remained in a feeble and suffering condition for several weeks. This sickness caused for some time a good deal of anxiety, but the kindly attentions she received, from all quarters, brought her, at last, back into favorable health. Her

friends in New York did not forget Mother St. Bernard. The September following her sickness, she received a very beautiful letter from Father Young, who had celebrated the jubilee of his priesthood, and had received from Mother St. Bernard her felicitations and the promise of many prayers. Father Young had been sent over to Europe, on this occasion, in order to obtain at Rome first-hand information concerning the Gregorian chant which Pope Pius X was so intent upon introducing throughout the churches of the world. He had some consoling audiences with the Holy Father, and returned to New York with renewed courage for introducing the chant into his choir of St. Francis Xavier's. All this he narrates in his letter to Mother St. Bernard.

What must have consoled her greatly was Father Young's visit, while in Paris, with Reverend Mother General. "What courtesy, what marvelous humility! During several days, the impression of this visit never left me, nor the feeling of very sensible and deep consolation which accompanied it." Father Young had also the happiness of saying Mass, on the feast of Blessed Peter Faber, at Rue Antoinette, on the very spot where Blessed Peter himself, the only one of St. Ignatius' companions who was at that time a priest, had said the Mass for that first little band of Jesuits, on the morning of their first Vows.

Mother St. Bernard was delighted to hear of these visits of Father Young in Paris. He had spoken with the Mother General and he had said Mass on that hallowed spot on Montmartre, where her zeal had been first given occasion to expend itself. Not the least consoling to her, must have been Father Young's assurances of his daily remembrances of her little Community and especially of herself.

Mother St. Bernard's stay in St. Louis was not destined to be long. Such consolations as the evident good her Helpers were doing in the great city, and such joys as the reception of messages about those she loved, brought by letters like those of Father Young, all amply repaid her for the worries and the trials incident to a new foundation and to the organization of different kinds of charitable works. These consolations, to souls of a fine and delicate fiber like hers, are a glow of happiness in their heart, a light of delicate grace in their life. It but fits them and strengthens them for still greater labors. A Religious Sister and admirer of Mother St. Bernard once said, that such was the fire in her heart of the love of Jesus Christ, that she would go to the ends of the earth for Him. And so, indeed, was she destined to do. Already, now, after so brief a sojourn in the metropolis of the Middle West, another call was about to come to her. Loving Christ, she responded with full-hearted generosity.

CHAPTER NINTH.

SAN FRANCISCO.

EVEN before the coming of the Helpers to St. Louis, certain moves had been made in San Francisco for the foundation of a house in the city of the Golden Gate. There were influential friends in the western city who wanted, by all means, to see the poor of the city, especially the poor of the Chinese, taken in hand by the Helpers. They considered that these Sisters could do work better than many others. It was impossible, however, to think of San Francisco before the house of St. Louis had been founded and set well on its feet. There must be a link from East to West. The house of St. Louis was destined to form that link, and a golden one it was. Before the founding of the San Francisco house, it was to be the advanced post by which the Helpers were to march closer to the conquest of the fields of the Golden West.

When, therefore, Mother St. Bernard had been in St. Louis not much over a year, she received word to prepare to go to San Francisco to arrange there for the foundation of another house.

She knew that this word was to come sooner or later, and she showed herself generous and enthusiastic for the new project from the start. The Archbishop of San Francisco, the Most Reverend Patrick Riordan, had been approached on the subject and gave his hearty approval to the coming of the Helpers. The Mother General at Paris also approved, since the reasons for a foundation in the western metropolis appealed as strongly to her as to Mother St. Bernard. There were many poor foreigners in San Francisco, especially Chinese, and this word is music to the soul of the French missionary. The climate is ideal, and the magic name of California called up images of golden sunshine and perpetual spring. The Religious, it was thought, who were worn out from the heats and the labors of St. Louis and New York, could be sent to San Francisco to recuperate instead of going back across the water to France. Besides, the rents were cheap, and the Helpers would have no difficulty in finding a suitable home. In this last item, at least, they were destined to be disappointed.

On November 30th, 1904, Mother St. Bernard left St. Louis with a companion to come over to meet the friends that were waiting for her in San Francisco. She was ill during a great part of this journey, and just mentions in her letter that she suffered much. But this did not prevent her from noting many things of interest,

during the course of the long journey. She speaks of "Mountain time" and "Pacific time" and is interested in the practical character of the observation car. She remarks on the farms they passed, on the vast and seemingly endless plains of the great West, dotted in many places with grazing cattle, and watered by slow and shallow rivers.

Then came the wide and rugged barrier of the Rockies. Though she admired the grandeur of all that was passed, the cast of her thoughts was, in great part, spiritual. She kept thinking of Father De Smet and of his early labors in these same mountains for the soul of the Indian. We follow her in her letters, as her train crept along the deserts of Utah and Nevada, wound through the passes of the high Sierras and then dropped down into the fertile north-central plain of California, the Sacramento valley. The city of Sacramento, the State capital, was passed, and then Oakland, and finally came the last span of San Francisco bay by ferry.

A hearty welcome was waiting for them at the ferry. Mrs. Bertha Welch, who had been instrumental in bringing out the Helpers to San Francisco, and three other ladies had come to greet them. But the train was an hour late, so that two had been obliged to leave, as it was after six in the evening. They were conducted immediately to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, whose guests they were going to be during their preliminary

brief visit. Mother Gorman gave them a warm and gracious welcome. Monsignor Charles Ramm was there from the cathedral, to greet the Helpers on the part of the Archbishop.

The next day was Sunday. The two visitors were consoled to have Mass and Communion once again, though they felt somewhat fatigued from their journey. That afternoon they called on Archbishop Riordan, who showed himself exceedingly gracious, and he pleased the Helpers by remarking that the following day was the feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, so great a friend of the poor. The Archbishop indicated to them the poorer parishes of the city and told them they might call upon the respective pastors, to discuss the ways and means of a foundation. The following day they went out to see Father P. J. Cummins, pastor of St. Patrick's, and Father Patrick E. Mulligan, pastor of St. Joseph's. These good priests had been expecting their visit, as the Archbishop had already spoken to them about the Helpers. With these then, and others, Mother St. Bernard consulted *per longum et latum* as to the where and the how of getting under way the new foundation.

One thing disappointed Mother St. Bernard. The houses of San Francisco, she reports in her letters, are close together, and there is no garden. This will make it more difficult to choose a suitable house, for she was very anxious to have

some sort of garden. Moreover, the rents ran exceedingly high. There was some disappointment and worry during these days. The Helpers went about much, inspected much, consulted and discussed. For a while, they could not seem to make any headway, and Mother St. Bernard writes to St. Louis and to Paris, letters expressive of her sufferings, but letters also that are instinct with her strong faith, for she thinks that these present trials are a sign that the Helpers have a great deal of good waiting to be done by them in San Francisco.

Finally they were able to fix upon a satisfactory arrangement. The old building of the *Youths' Directory* of Father Denis Crowley on Howard Street was, at that time, vacant. The Little Sisters of the Poor had lived in it before their removal to their fine new home on Lake Street. It was near the populous and comparatively poor parish of St. Joseph's, so that for the work of the Helpers this feature was practical. True, there was no garden, but the building was spacious and good enough for temporary quarters. So, until a better home could be found, it was decided to come here. The place was rented to them most reasonably, at sixty dollars a month.

During these difficult days of searching and delay, Mother St. Bernard and her companion were delighted by the good-will which everybody,

both clergy and laity, manifested towards them. "It was not," she wrote, "merely the formality of politeness, it was faith." The Very Reverend Provincial of the Missouri Province, Father Grimmelsman, had written to his old friend and one-time subject, Father John Frieden, Superior of the Jesuit Mission of California and President of St. Ignatius College, about the expected arrival of Mother St. Bernard in San Franciso. He proved a valuable friend to the Helpers by his acquaintance with many influential people, and by the wise counsels he could give them out of his thorough knowledge of San Francisco. Father Robert Kenna, President of Santa Clara College, was delighted to have an opportunity of meeting Mother St. Bernard. She writes that Father Kenna had the reputation of a saint. They visited the Paulist Fathers on the edge of Chinatown, and learned from them a great deal about the Chinese of San Francisco.

When all things, therefore, had been definitely arranged, there was nothing more to keep Mother St. Bernard. Besides, she was anxious to be back in St. Louis to spend Christmas with her dear Community at Delmar Avenue. Late in December, the two Helpers took train and arrived at their home in St. Louis on Christmas Eve.

This last stay of Mother St. Bernard in St. Louis was to be very brief indeed. February 1st she was off again, this time with a chosen little

First Convent of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, Howard St., San Francisco.

band of followers, speeding out across the plains and up over the mountains and down again into the land of the setting sun. Again the Religious of the Sacred Heart, in the person of Mother Gorman, extended to the Helpers their gracious hospitality until such time as the *"Youths' Directory,"* at 2030 Howard Street, could be set in fit order for the reception of the Helpers. The old frame building was in very bad condition, and there were times when Mother St. Bernard felt herself to be on the brink of discouragement. But the spirit of her little band was indomitable. They worked industriously at the interior of the building, and they were encouraged by the good-will of all about them. In not too long a time after their arrival, the Helpers moved into their new home.

The same interesting and sometimes humorous incidents of New York and St. Louis were here reenacted and it is needless again to go into the details. Curious and persistent reporters from the dailies, came to write them up; they received visitors of all sorts, from sympathetic and intelligent admirers, to those who sought for all kinds of service and all kinds of instructions. The gracious Archbishop came on a tour of inspection, and left the Religious in laughing cheerfulness. But something was missing to them still, and until this desire should be fulfilled, the house would seem to them but an empty cave. The Blessed Sacra-

ment was not yet present. Their Jesus did not yet reside within the Tabernacle of their chapel, where they could come during a quiet moment and pour out their hearts to Him.

Finally, however, this essential happiness came, and the first Mass was celebrated on May 18th, 1905. Now they gradually began to form their usual contacts: Visits to the poor and the sick; catechism classes and First Communion classes for the children; sewing classes for older girls, and spiritual conferences and retreats for the women. There was the beginnning in San Francisco, to be a repetition of their success of New York and St. Louis, when something happened which broke, for the time being, the continuity of their labors and threw the whole of San Francisco into wild disorder.

The Easter of 1906 was just over. The little Community of Mother St. Bernard was relaxing after the strain of the long Holy Week services and pressure of labor for their charges during that holy time. On Easter Monday afternoon the Mother Superior had taken her Community for rest and recreation to the then secluded heights of Buena Vista Park, whence a beautiful panorama in three directions, unfolded itself out to the horizon. The weather was perfect, says Mother St. Bernard, in one of her letters. Over Golden Gate Park and out into the blue expanse of the Pacific they could see; north to Mount

Tamalpais and the graceful hills of San Rafael; then east across the clustered city itself, over the bay to the range of the Oakland hills with Mount Diablo rising up large above them.

Late in the afternoon of Easter Tuesday, April 17th, the Helpers had a meeting of some of their girls. When this gathering broke up the girls did not want to leave. "We don't want to go home," they said, "we want to pass the night here with you." It was half an hour before Mother St. Bernard could get them all to go. After the events that followed, the Religious looking back upon it, considered this feeling on the part of the girls as some vague and strange presentiment of a calamity, that was on the point of breaking over them. Some of those girls, by six the next morning, had come very close to death.

The Helpers of the Holy Souls arose at their usual hour on the morning of April 18th—4:45. Most of them were ready to go to the chapel and the Sister-cook would ordinarily have lighted the fire for breakfast, but she told herself she would wait this morning. At 5:17 the earthquake came that all but pulled and wrenched their wooden building out from its foundations. But it did not fall, as did a few of the houses in the immediate neighborhood. On the inside many things did fall; much plaster raising a cloud of white dust in every room and in the halls; in the rooms of some of the Religious, heavy chests that

would have crushed those they fell upon. Two or three spoke afterwards of hair-breadth escapes, which they attributed to Heaven's special protection.

When the first fright and amazement was over, Mother St. Bernard sent two of the Community to venture out into the streets to see and report how things stood in the neighborhood, and to consider what they could do to help. But the whole city, it seemed, was out in the streets, most were in their night apparel with only a cloak or a blanket thrown about them. Some of the streets, and especially Howard Street, yawned with fissures, and fires had started downtown. The water mains were broken, and it was this that spoke of ruin. But the chaplain of the Helpers, Monsignor Ferrant, nothing daunted and after a long walk, for the cars were not running, reported promptly at 6:30 for the Holy Sacrifice. He was not afraid to go into the shaken building and to begin his daily Mass. Such courage acted as a general tonic; it bolstered their morale.

After Mass the Helpers took turns in kneeling before their God and begging protection for themselves and safety for the city. Frightened people could come to quiet themselves in prayer; the convent began immediately to become a refuge for the afflicted. It was cold milk and bread the Community had for breakfast that morning, for orders immediately came that no fires were to be

lit in the homes. But orders came too late, and some people did not think. Fires in the houses had already led to general conflagrations, and all soon came to see what was happening; the city was being doomed by the march of spreading flames.

Mother St. Bernard was trying to make her examen at noon, when a Sister broke in to say that St. Ignatius, the church and college of the Jesuits, was on fire. She rushed to the roof and with sinking heart saw, enveloped in flames, the two large towers of the magnificent church. The fires were spreading. The streets were now flowing with humanity, men, women, and children escaping from the flames out to the hills towards the south and west of the city. It was plain the Helpers too would have to pack up and go. They set to work, and late in the afternoon they had trunks and mattresses got together and they determined to ask hospitality for the night of the Sisters of Mercy at their school in St. Peter's parish, within a half hour's walking distance. Father Cantillon was summoned to take care of the Blessed Sacrament. But the Father protested he had no place himself to conserve It and he did a wonderful thing. He gave the Precious Treasure to Mother St. Bernard, that she might carry Christ next to her heart, until she would be able to return Him to the Tabernacle in the chapel of the Sisters of Mercy. "My loved Lord then is confided to me," she writes. "In the presence of

Jesus thus abased and giving Himself to my indignity, my tears ran freely . . . I escorted Him accompanied with a few of the Community, while the others attended to the transportation of the chests and mattresses . . . They had been able to hire a wagon for six dollars. The streets are full. Everybody is out of doors fearing another quake, and fearing fire. Walking along we prayed. I adored Christ hidden in my arms. And when my heart was in agony, because I did not see the others appear with the wagon, my heart cried out towards my Lord. I looked up and there they were, escorted by Father Mulligan."

The Sisters of Mercy, placed out of immediate danger of the flames, received the Helpers as real Sisters should, and placed an entire parlor at their disposal. They arrange their things as best they can. Soon a confessional is set up nearby, and Father Casey comes to hear all those who desire to approach. The Helpers are exhausted at the fall of night, and they try to rest. But sleep comes to them only fitfully, for there is a continual coming and going up and down the steps and along the halls.

After a weary night, morning came at last and the Helpers were consoled with Mass and Communion. That day some of them returned to Howard Street, to see if they could not still remove some articles of value, for the fire had not yet reached their old home. No one was

allowed to enter a house in this district, but one of the Helpers had a word with the officer in command, and he gave her and her companions free leave to enter, to take what they wanted. Not only that, he placed his men at their disposal and they did, in the way of packing and hauling, that which women could not do. The chief commandeered a cart for the Helpers and, with not much delay, they transported to the school of the Sisters of Mercy, many of the things that would otherwise have gone up in the smoke of the flames that soon came on now to sweep over that part of the city.

After a restless and fatiguing day, during which the Helpers endeavored to render such help as they were able, they settled themselves finally in their parlor, for as good a night's rest as they might be able to snatch out of all the turmoil and excitement. They were just beginning to doze off, when an alarm was sounded. The school was ordered to be evacuated. It had been decided to dynamite the city and county hospital in order to stop, by this counter action, the progress of the flames in that portion of the city. This building was so near the Sister's school that the shock of the explosion might prove fatal to the building, already badly shaken by the quake. There was nothing for it, but to pack up and go. While the other Helpers were gathering what they could, Mother St. Bernard was helping with the altar

and the chapel. She was near the Tabernacle, when Father Casey came up, as she thought, to take away himself the Sacred Species. He gave It to her, and she never forgot the tenderness with which he confided the Precious Burden to her enfolding arms, nor did she ever forget the devotion with which he said: "Take Jesus; keep Jesus with you."

Thus a second time Mother St. Bernard was privileged to carry her Lord, this time to the Church of St. John, where they arrived towards midnight. On their way, they saw the north and east of the city being devoured by a closing circle of flame, which threw up an ominous glow to the sky that could be seen from San José fifty miles to the south. Father Brady received them royally, set the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle, and assigned the basement of the church to the Sisters who had come in a group. They spread out their mattresses, and laid themselves down, but Mother Bernard says simply: "It was impossible to sleep."

Two other groups of Sisters had come with the Helpers to St. John's Church. After Mass the next morning, it was decided that the Sisters of Mercy should return to St. Peter's parish, where they would be cared for, that the Sisters of Jesus and Mary should go over to their Provincial's residence in Oakland, and that the Helpers of the Holy Souls should go out to the home of the

Little Sisters of the Poor, far out on Lake Street and away from all danger. Hither Mother St. Bernard's little group found their way on Friday morning, worn out from fatigue, from worry and from loss of sleep. But they were wonderfully received, and a few rooms were assigned to them, where they could be quiet and take some much needed sleep.

Sunday afternoon Archbishop Montgomery, coadjutor to Archbishop Riordan, was announced. He wanted to see Mother St. Bernard. There was warm greeting. He was unshaven and unkempt; he had been working at the pumps. He told her how two priests had saved the Cathedral from fire, at the risk of their lives, by climbing up the bells of the steeple, and putting out the flames that had begun to creep along the ropes. And then he said: "Mother, do you want a nice home for your Sisters, where you can remain for three months, and from which, as headquarters, you can begin work at once among the poor people?" "Delighted! *Deo gratias!*" replied Mother St. Bernard. "Nothing would please us better than to be able to get right to work among the people, in the camps and parks." The Bishop then told her that the splendid home of Mr. Queen, at 2212 Sacramento Street, was waiting to receive them, but that they must move out to occupy it at once, lest it be commandeered by the army officer for others.

No sooner said than done. Mother St. Bernard gathered her little band together, broke to them the good news, made arrangements for the transportation of such effects as still remained with them, after the disturbances of the past week, and were off to their new home in Sacramento Street.

It had all happened this way: Mr. Richard Queen was an old and intimate friend of Father Frieden, Superior of the California Mission of the Jesuits. For the first few nights after the quake, Mr. Queen had offered Father Frieden hospitality, which was gratefully accepted. When he saw that most of the available houses of the city would be commandeered for service, Father Frieden advised his host to get some nuns located in his home as soon as possible, otherwise, it might have to be turned over to other less desirable occupants. Mr. Queen acted immediately, He got in touch with Archbishop Montgomery (Archbishop Riordan was in New York), and the latter bethought himself straightway of the Helpers of the Holy Souls. But how to find them! He started out in search of them. He could get no conveyance and had to go on foot. Through the Sisters of Mercy, he found out their location and had thus come in upon Mother St. Bernard, that Sunday afternoon, with such delightful news. And none too soon did the Helpers arrive at Mr. Queen's residence. Some Sisters of the Holy Family had preceded them thither, and when an

officer came to inspect the house, these Sisters told him that twenty-five other Sisters would be there any minute to take up their quarters. The officer wrote on his list opposite the number 2212 Sacramento Street: "Filled."

Now Mother St. Bernard's Helpers could settle down, begin work among their beloved poor, and be happy. And work in plenty they had to do among the poor and the children of the great tent cities of Golden Gate Park, where the greater part of the refugees had settled. Then, there was similar work at the other parks and squares of the city. A few days after their arrival out at the Queens' residence, one of the Helpers was asked to take the census of the Catholics at Jefferson Square, and another to do the same at Hamilton Square. May devotions were started at Mr. Queen's home on the evening of April 30th, and every Sunday, to the great joy and satisfaction of Mr. Queen, Mass was said in the hall of his home. Crowds came to these Masses; it was like a parish. Many people began to frequent the residence, and non-Catholics, shaken by the calamity, came for instruction in the Catholic faith. During the first months after the earthquake several conversions were made by the Helpers and by the Sisters of the Holy Family.

But the home of Mr. Queen was not the only place where the Helpers made converts, during those trying and strenuous days. The chronicle of

the little Community records many others made during this time, especially at Hamilton Square and at Lafayette Square, the inhabitants of the latter being mainly Protestant. The Helpers did work besides at the Presidio, among the Italians and French at Point Lobos and Harbor View, and among the Spaniards in different parts of the city.

Thus was the apostolic heart of Mother St. Bernard consoled, and thus did events prove that her former judgment had been correct; that the trials and the anxieties of the first days of the foundation in San Francisco were a sign that also in this city, the abundant blessings of God's grace were destined to be showered upon many hearts, through the spiritual ministrations of the Helpers of the Holy Souls.

Novitiate of Our Lady of Providence, Chappaqua, N. Y.
Founded in 1922.

CHAPTER TENTH.

BACK TO FRANCE.

WHILE the fire, which followed the earthquake, was devastating San Francisco, we know that reports and exaggerations of the calamity were flying around the world. What must have been the sentiments and the anxious fears of Mère de la Miséricorde concerning her far distant daughters, when she heard that an earthquake had completely destroyed San Francisco, that a fire had followed to burn up what was left, and that, finally, a tidal wave had washed the twice-ruined city into the sea? On the morning of the quake itself, Mother St. Bernard had sent out two Religious to try to get a telegram over to Paris, to the Mother General. But this was impossible, for all the lines were broken. Not until four days later, April 22nd, could Mother St. Bernard assure the dear ones at Paris and in France that all was well with them. In the meantime, on April 20th, the Mother General wrote Mother St. Bernard a note which discloses the agony of her suspense:

"DEAR DAUGHTER:

"Where will these lines find you? What has become of you in the midst of this frightful

calamity? It is with agony of soul that I ask myself these questions, not knowing whether there will be anyone of you left to reply to me. In this doubt, in which I am involved, I shall say no more to you today. We have sent on two wires but without any result. May the heart of our Divine Master, in whom we place all our confidence, protect you. In Him believe me to be your Mother sorrowfully anxious."

Then on the 24th, after receiving the wire from Mother St. Bernard, the Mother General sounds the note of joy, that follows relief from anxious doubt and fear:

"Only God is able to know the relief which your wire of the twenty-second brought me. There is no parallel to the anguish of spirit we went through during the days of April 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st. This anxiety was shared by all our houses, and I made haste to reassure all, as soon as I received your wire . . . You have been saved, but at what price and at the cost of what sufferings! . . ."

Another soul-friend of Mother St. Bernard, Mother St. Magdalen of Pazzi, writes from Versailles May 10th, 1906;

"My dear St. Bernard:

"How can I tell you what went on in my heart concerning you, after this terrible calamity? I did not quit you for a single moment . . . and those days of suspense, waiting for word of you, were long and agonized. Nevertheless, I knew, I

felt that the Divine Master was with you, and that he would guide you safely through every calamity, but I was far from thinking, that His tender regard for you would have gone to the lengths of accompanying you at your every footstep. (She is referring to Mother St. Bernard's carrying of the Blessed Sacrament.) While you give yourself to Him and abandon yourself to His care, He gives Himself to you and abandons Himself to you . . . Oh, inexpressive tenderness! We are ravished at the thought of it! . . . The twenty-sixth psalm had, on that day of disaster, its full application . . . and for you a literal one. What a Master we serve! How good it is to live only by Him and for Him!"

Mother St. Bernard kept her Sisters in France, and especially Mère de la Miséricorde, informed of the development of events. During the consoling work of the Helpers at the residence of Mr. Queen, time went slipping rapidly by. The weeks of the three months, during which it was arranged that they could stay there, were fast running away. A decision had to be arrived at concerning the future of the Helpers. Their home, with thousands of others, had been destroyed in the fire. Would they be able to procure another at a price which they could meet? And if not, what was to be done? Many letters passed between Mother St. Bernard and the Mother General on this point. Time sped on and no house could be found. The Mother General had many days of

anxious thought and, at one time, suggested to Mother St. Bernard that the little Community of San Francisco might have to be dispersed, at least for the time being. The thought of this possibility was very painful to Mother St. Bernard, and she ardently hoped that this, eventually, would never have to be realized. Still the time was approaching when the Helpers would have to quit the residence of Mr. Queen.

Finally, to the joy and relief of all, after many inquiries a house was found which was within their means. To this they would go immediately. —Then came a big surprise.—A new Superior was appointed for the San Francisco Community and Mother St. Bernard was called back to Paris!

There had been a great deal of anxiety concerning the health of Mother St. Bernard. The months following the earthquake had been a great drain upon her energies, to say nothing of the shock to her nervous system which the days of the calamity itself must have brought. She had been none too strong, even before that time, as her frequent lapses from health have given us to understand. Even her appearance had notably altered, and we know that she was of the kind whose spirit would not allow her to obtain the necessary repose of body and mind. It was for this reason, and then also, as Mother St. Bernard gives notice in one of her later letters, for the purpose of having her explain thoroughly to the Mother Gen-

eral the situation of the Society in America and the conditions of that country, that Mère de la Miséricorde had decided to recall her subject and the child of her soul, back to the cradle of the Society in Paris. Mother St. Bernard here would obtain the necessary rest and here she could, in long and intimate conferences with the Reverend Mother unfold to her understanding mind conditions of affairs in general with regard to the Society in America.*

Mother St. Bernard, accompanied by Mother St. Leonard, left San Francisco on September 5th, 1906. They were in New York on the ninth, and on the thirteenth they embarked on the liner "Lorraine." The nineteenth found them at Havre, France.

If there was sorrow at the departure, there was joy at the arrival. If the Religious in San Francisco wept tears of sorrow to see their loving and heroic Mother leave them, there were tears of joy at Paris, in the Mother-House, at the return home from the wars, of this valiant officer of a part of Christ's army. Once again the joy had come to both Mère de la Miséricorde and Mother St. Bernard, of clasping each other in

* It was the fond desire of Mother St. Bernard to open a novitiate for the Helpers in America. This wish met its fulfilment in November 1922, and the Helpers now have a home for the formation of novices in Chappaqua, Westchester County, New York. A House in Chicago was opened in August 1926, now located at 1300 South St. Louis Avenue.

their arms; once again to Mother St. Bernard, came the consolation accompanied with such profound peace, of unfolding her heart's deepest secrets to the Mother of her soul.

Yet Mother St. Bernard had been made for action. She was one of those souls who cannot long remain without some active charge and some share in the labors of God's vineyard and not feel a reaction against enforced quietude, and a certain restiveness and impatience to be again in harness. But she had been called to Paris for a rest and, in the present state of her health, rest, like it or not, she must have. This is why there were times, during the months that followed, that she suffered the return of her old desolation. For a little more than two years Mother St. Bernard was to remain inactive, and they are two uneventful years, except as far as regards the history of a soul undergoing the slings and arrows of desolation, the throes and the pangs of mental suffering. So bitter indeed becomes at times the note of suffering and agony in her spiritual notes and letters, that we suspect she may have been passing through that strange and mystic purification, preparatory to the infusion of still more precious graces and still more intimate light. St. John of the Cross calls this purificative trial, the "Dark Night of the Soul." And dread trial it is, since even so rare and radiant a flower as St. Teresa of Jesus, felt herself bent and crumpled in its grip.

Mother St. Bernard remained quietly at the Mother-House at Paris until the February of the following year, when she was sent to Blanchelande in Normandy, the old home of her novitiate days, to take charge of the young Religious going through the period of their Third Probation.* The untimely death of Mother Mary of the Immaculate Conception, who had been Mistress of Tertians, necessitated this change, which was only provisional. It is difficult to replace a Mistress already loved, but Mother St. Bernard was not slow in winning the confidence of her new charges. Still, when she had work, she would not spare herself. After the long retreat, she broke down and, at the end of May, she had to be recalled to Paris and put indefinitely on the sick list.

So again, as it was the way with this soul, there came a return of suffering. Her spirit longed for the field of the foreign missions; her soul looked out wistfully and sorrowfully towards China. This strong desire had taken hold of her heart when she had been in Paris only a few weeks, after her return from America. Her desolation was indeed great. She was sent to Versailles, but suffered there another serious relapse, and had to be recalled to Paris. Mère de la Miséricorde was much worried. The daughter longed for foreign fields, and felt that thither, grace was calling and attract-

* The third year of Probation made by the Helpers of the Holy Souls, before their last Vows.

ing her; the Mother was anxious indeed to second these zealous desires, but she could not, within all that is right and prudent, send a sick and failing Religious to the uttermost parts of the earth. Mother St. Bernard must first, then, be cured.

Out of a desolation, during all of which time she tried to love her Christ "in spite of a poverty of spirit without equal, and trials as of death which kill me," as she says, her gentle and loving Mother General sent her to Lourdes, there to pray to Our Lady for the restoration of her health. Mother St. Bernard left at the beginning of July, 1908, for the holy city of the South, now with a new balm of hope in her heart. At Lourdes she oscillated between hope and fear, happiness and discouragement. After the second plunge into the healing waters of the shrine, she felt herself greatly relieved and poured out her heart to her Lord, in words of loving gratitude. A novena had been begun. The faith of all around her, the comportment of the pilgrims, the processions of the Blessed Sacrament, all impressed her. A second time she underwent a wave of desolation and then again, when the novena was ended, she felt as if she were cured and there is a radiant *Magnificat*.

But it was clear her cure was not very decisive, for at the end of August she went down into Spain to the house of the Helpers of St. Sebastien, in order to be able to make a pilgrimage to Loyola, the famous birthplace and shrine of St. Ignatius.

As at Lourdes, Mother St. Bernard received here also precious graces, and marked improvement in, if not complete restoration of, health. She was one day praying at the shrine and asking for her return to health. She says in her spiritual journal: "Hardly had I finished my demand, when I became conscious of a strong burning sensation, and, immediately, my pains ceased."

Mother St. Bernard wrote in great joy to the Mother General, stating the many graces she had received at both shrines and what she considered her definitive cure. Her spirits were somewhat dampened at the reply of the Reverend Mother, who demanded a certain time that the cure might prove itself definitive and durable. Mother St. Bernard returned then to Lourdes, in order to try out the stability of her cure and to exercise further her faith and her obedience. This was in September; she remained there until November, when she was recalled finally to Paris, to the great solace of her soul. But this soul of hers was still longing for the missions. So strong and so constant a desire, in the face of so many difficulties and discouragements, was indeed impressive. But her health, not even yet, could be called anything near robust; the Mother General was embarrassed.

Mother St. Bernard wanted to go and begged to be sent; the prudent Mother General hesitated between loving consent and wise delay. But finally, the balance swung in favor of Mother St. Ber-

nard's missionary zeal. It was decided that she should be sent to China, and December 18th was fixed for the departure. And now at the realization of her most cherished dreams, of hopes and desires, the fulfillment of which she has for years been yearning, what does this delicately assembled and finely adjusted instrument, this rich and complex psychology, set down in her spiritual diary: "Mother has just told me that I shall leave on the eighteenth, for China . . . My Jesus, it is You who allow that I feel deeply the sacrifice!" Truly for the zealous and the strong willed, for the saintly and the Christ-like, there is always suffering. For there is love everywhere; everywhere are there spiritual bonds and soulful attachments; the closer approach to one attraction means but the severing and the snapping of the other. It is human nature; it is human nature even thoroughly supernaturalized, for because one is supernatural, one does not cease to feel and to love.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

CHINA.

MOTHER ST. BERNARD embarked from Marseilles on the "Polynesian," December 19th, 1908, together with three other Helpers: Mother Louise, Mother de Loyola, and Mother St. Cassilda. At Paris, the day before, she had bid adieu to Mère de la Miséricorde and to Mother St. Magdalen of Pazzi. This was like death to her, she wrote in her spiritual diary. She carried also with her, in addition to the pain of this separation, the affectionate farewell and the tender solicitude of her devoted brother, Raymond. He had written from Bagnères on December 11th:

"MY VERY DEAR SISTER:

"You well understand the sentiments your letter provoked, coming as it did after those of the preceding days. There is no necessity of my saying to you that, in the reason which you give for desiring to sacrifice yourself still more in order to make up for the time lost (i. e. for her delay in entering the Religious life), you are the occasion of an added trial to my poor heart . . . So, as a reparation, you ask to depart for a distant mis-

sion, whence, at your age, one scarcely returns. Oh, dear sister, how far we are from your perfection, and how great a distance we must yet travel before we comprehend the need of sacrifice! . . . We shall never understand it! And now, a cold which has clung on to me for over a month and which I cannot shake off, prevents me from going to you and throwing myself in your arms . . . You say that you will meet me in a blessed eternity where our family will be reunited. How do you think that I will be in the same Heaven as you, when you do all to attain to this beatitude by a surpassingly perfect life, while I, on the contrary, you know it well, am not able to follow you? We cannot understand the saints in reading of their heroic deeds . . . and yet there will always be such!"

The Helpers' long voyage to Shanghai was very pleasant indeed. There were times when Mother St. Bernard's old sickness returned upon her, but not in a serious way. "A trial of ill-health," she comments, "to increase my faith." There was a priest on board, a missionary to China; perhaps, as Mother St. Bernard characteristically remarks, "a future martyr." Daily Mass was an immense consolation for the Religious, and especially the midnight Mass on Christmas. All Christmas Eve they were making great preparations for this. Father called upon them to decorate the altar in the beautifully tasteful manner that is the way with nuns. Old Christmas carols were sung that night before Mass and

some boxes opened, which Mère de la Miséricorde had sent for that special purpose. These were delicate surprises for the "little floating Community," which their Sisters in Paris had prepared as a Christmas present for them. Mass is heard with tender devotion and with gratitude for all the Infant Jesus' gifts of grace. That night the Helpers reposed in the arms of Christ.

Their trusty liner, the "Polynesian," steamed east across the Mediterranean, slipped through the Suez Canal and on out of the Red Sea, into the Indian Ocean. Port Said, at the mouth of the Suez Canal, was touched at three o'clock Christmas morning. Here the liner put in for a few hours, and here a letter was delivered to the Helpers from Mother St. Paul. Across the Indian Ocean they were soon ploughing, and put in for their next stop at Colombo, in the island of Ceylon. Here they heard the news of the terrible earthquake at Messina and it made them think of San Francisco. It was the vigil of the Epiphany. The stop was long enough to allow the travelers to disembark. They went up to the house of the Little Sisters of the Poor, where they were cordially received and where they had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion before returning to their boat.

The "Polynesian" then glided north to Sumatra, slipped down through the Straits of Malacca, so redolent of the ancient memory of St. Francis

Xavier, and then stopped at Singapore, at the very tip of the Malay peninsula. Here again, the Helpers were able to leave their ship and to receive Holy Communion. The "Polynesian" then turned north and stopped at Saigon on the south coast of Cochin China. From Saigon on, the travelers had new guests at table. Two Chinese, an Indian and a German. One of the Chinamen was cold and haughty, the other was more companionable; they both regarded the Helpers with a good deal of curiosity. The Indian sat next to Mother St. Cassilda and watched her closely when she would make the sign of the Cross before meals. The German did not like this heterogeneous mixture of religions and nationalities.

From Saigon they had their longest stretch of the voyage, almost directly north to Shanghai, where they arrived January 21st, at 3:30 in the afternoon. Before leaving their cabin the four Helpers recited together the *De Profundis,* the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat* to thank the Lord for His goodness to them during the voyage safely and pleasantly made. They then descended into a tender which carried them into the port of Shanghai. On the wharf were waiting to greet them Mother St. Philomène, the Superior of the Mission, Mother St. Dominic and Mother St. Germaine. "It was well the occasion to repeat," says Mother St. Bernard of this meeting, "what happiness, what joy."

The Mission to which Mother St. Bernard was going to consecrate the last years of her well-filled life, was begun in 1867 by the Helpers of the Holy Souls, at the request of Mgr. Languillat, S.J., Vicar Apostolic of Kiang-Nan. Ignorant of the language and the customs of this far-off land, but strong in their love of God and of souls, the Helpers were given the direction of a large establishment situated a few miles from Shanghai, the "Sen-Mou-ieu," or "Garden of the Blessed Mother." Here, they had under their control, together with the school wherein the Catechists were to be formed, the crippled and the blind, the deaf and the dumb, orphans and foundlings, numbering altogether 1300 inmates.

When Mother St. Bernard arrived in China, several well organized institutions bespoke the success with which the Helpers were carrying on their work among the native Chinese. Besides the "Sen-Mou-ieu" establishment, there was the St. Joseph's establishment and that of the Holy Family. Moreover, several Chinese schools and dispensaries were all testifying to the success of the Helpers in mastering the difficulties of the early days. A few years later a fourth establishment, on the same lines as that of the "Sen-Mou-ieu," was opened in the Vicariate of Tcheli. Here, in that primitive country, still untouched by the inroads of modern civilization, the Helpers are working amidst naïve and simple souls, and with

great consolation, witness to the formation of their truly Christian spirit. Dispensaries are opened for the cure of the body as well as for the salvation of souls, and there, as in Shanghai, many are the little angels who owe the Helpers their eternal happiness.

Of the three new arrivals, Mother St. Bernard was the only one destined to remain at Shanghai. The others of the little band, that had half encircled the globe, were dispersed to other houses of the mission. The House of the Holy Family was attached to a school, of which Mother St. Bernard was to be principal.* But poor Mother St. Bernard was not destined to do a great deal of active work in her dear China. She was now within a few months of sixty years of age. Her health, in spite of some signs of improvement, was really constantly on the decline. No sooner had she arrived at Shanghai than she had an attack of bronchitis. Her heart became very bad, and as she explains it in one of her letters, she "suffered fierce palpitations of the heart, strangulations of the throat and then, sometimes, almost a failure of any heart action, as if she were about to die." Nevertheless, she was four years in China before the end actually came, and these four years

* Today, this very House which was the scene of Mother St. Bernard's last labor, is well nigh a thing of the past, for its vast and magnificent buildings have been bombarded and occupied by the Reds.

INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY FAMILY, SHANGHAI, CHINA, WHERE MOTHER ST. BERNARD DIED.

are characterized, not by a great deal of active work, for her state of health would not permit it, but by an intense and active interior life which is witnessed to by the pages of her spiritual diary, which she kept up, until the weakness of approaching death allowed her no longer to hold her pen to paper.

Gradually she became used to the thought of death. The dearest Mother of her soul, Mère de la Miséricorde, passed on to enjoy the vision of her Lord, shortly after the arrival of Mother St. Bernard in China. The Mother General wrote to Mother St. Bernard on February 11th: "How sweet it is to me to think that my dearest daughter has, after so wonderful a voyage, arrived in such good condition." She wrote again on February 20th, and then on March 6th, and finally once during the month of June. This was her last letter to her dearest daughter. The Mother General has been speaking about supernatural charity and that sisterly love which should actuate the members of a Religious community. She continues: "For the maintenance of that intimate union, that conformity of sentiment which renders sweet the life of a community, I do not see any other possible way than supernatural charity . . . The love of Our Lord ought thus to bind all hearts together . . . After everything, He alone remains." A few days, and the Mother General was to see in her own experience the verification

of these words. Life and this world slipped away from her; only Christ remained.

Mother St. Bernard was heart-broken. Her dearest Mother into whose understanding heart she had, for the past thirty years and more, poured out her soul's most intimate secrets, that Mother was no more! One thought consoled her: Mère de la Miséricorde was with their mutual Lover, Christ, and very soon now, she herself would be united with them both. The pain of this loss was diminished, not very long after, by the succession to the generalship of Mother St. Magdalen of Pazzi, another intimate friend, who had written so touchingly to her during the days of the earthquake and fire at San Francisco. Mother St. Magdalen of Pazzi would, henceforth, become the Mother.

And she needed a Mother. It was not only physical suffering, complete loss of health, that she had to endure in China, but that other and severer sort of pain of the interior soul. As we look back upon her life, we see that she has never for a long period been without this heavy cross. Before her Religious life, then in the novitiate, in New York particularly, and most of all after her return from San Francisco. In all these periods she suffered interior trials. It was in this way Our Lord had destined that her soul be purified in trial, and cleansed from its dross in the crucible of the chalice. Her spiritual diary of these her

last years speaks frequently of a suffering soul that offers all to Christ. This made her like unto Christ and so, in the deepest folds of her spirit, this suffering made her happy. But it was not all pain. There were spots of bright light; there were pools and lakes along the heat and dry dustiness of this road, whence her spirit drew in draughts of the purest spiritual consolation, a foretaste indeed of Paradise.

One of the things which troubled Mother St. Bernard at this time was the fact that she thought she had unduly influenced, by the persistence of her expressed desires for China, the Mother General's decision to send her to the Orient. This doubt comes to the surface several times in the diary. If this has been so, she is sorry; if she has thus placed herself outside the path God had shaped for her in His all-seeing Providence, and thus deprived herself of precious graces, she can now only throw herself at the feet of Christ, lift up her voice to His mercy, and beg His forgiveness. Thus do we again glimpse a soul in conflict, a heart which, in these last purifications, is being made ready for the final passage to her Spouse.

In January, 1910, she writes to Mother St. Magdalen of Pazzi: "I feel that I am nearing Eternity and that it is time that I make haste to give to the Divine Master all that He has a right to expect, and to make reparation for so unprofit-

able a life." Month after month passed. She had periods of reappearing strength, when she could live the regular life of the Community, and do a little work. Then soon would come a relapse, with inactivity and its attendant interior suffering.

In May, 1911, a cry of agony escapes: "Trials terrible as of death! May Jesus deign to receive the holocaust . . . A secret martyrdom; I embrace it with love." Here then, as we have always seen, is the source of her strength and fundamental peace. She loved Christ with all the devotion of her heart, and love made the cross acceptable. "Love is stronger than death."

By December, 1912, she had taken definitely to her bed, and she never left it except to recline, during days of improvement, on her easy chair. On December 31st she writes still with hope that she might yet be cured. The doctor, she says, is pleased with her condition. But she had developed a sort of chronic appendicitis which worried greatly her Superior, Mother St. Philomène, for should an acute attack come on, it was greatly to be feared that she would not have strength enough to sustain an operation. She rested quietly and peacefully during these her last weeks. Her letters are cheerful; she had been able to hear midnight Mass that Christmas, and to all who came to visit her, she was kindly and gentle. For whatever interior trials she may have had to endure, they were her own secrets and those of

her directors; others saw only one who had put on the sweetness of Christ. Mother St. Bernard had always been the soul of courtesy. To those who visited her, the delicate lines of her countenance and the kindly light of her eyes seemed to soften yet more gently with the approach of her last days. Her last letter is dated January 21st, 1913. She says that her health is sinking, remembers that it is four years since her arrival in China, expresses love and sympathy for all her Religious family, and gives utterance to the desire of loving God "very much, very much."

When February came on, Mother St. Bernard began to sink rapidly. On the 4th she began to suffer very acutely, and drugs had to be administered in order to produce some rest in sleep. On Wednesday morning, the 5th, she rallied a little and was able to receive her Lord in Holy Communion. The days that followed up to the 8th were again very painful, and the remedies administered had less and less effect. Outside of a feeble "yes," she could no longer speak, but she responded by signs, and smiled her thanks for all the kindly offices and gentle attentions of loving hands. On the 7th she fell into a state of coma, out of which she rallied on the evening of the 8th. The priest who was at her side, gave her the final benediction to which she replied by a sign. She seemed from time to time to utter a word. It

was "Jesus." On the morning of the 9th, she went to Him.

As Mother St. Bernard lay in death that day in the parlor, she was sweet and peaceful to look upon, and the approach to the coffin was not of fear but of hope and consolation. Thus many said, priests, Sisters and the laity. Children came to touch the coffin with their beads. Deep and rich nature, of warm and vibrant affections, a fine and delicately balanced psychology, Mother St. Bernard was of the race of saints. She penetrated in beyond the fringe of sanctity, because she knew how to love. To know her was to love her, and to know her well, was never to forget. When Père Auriault, an old acquaintance, heard of her death, he said:

"Oh, that holy Mother St. Bernard! . . . She sees God already. She was one of the Helpers that I have known since my first connections with the Society. A divine soul! . . . Yes, certainly, she is in the memento of my Mass, but she, also, prays for us."

Very touching words are those of Father Young, S.J., written from St. Francis Xavier's, New York, February 23rd, 1913, to the Mother Superior at Shanghai, words spoken out of the heart of a priest:

"I pray for the dear dead, but I do not think that she has need of my poor intercession. I knew Mother St. Bernard more intimately, perhaps,

Convent and Chapel of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, Chicago.
Founded in 1925.

than any other person, and I look upon that knowledge as one of the greatest graces of my Religious life. I have unlimited confidence in her intercession. May she bless from the height of Heaven this Community of New York which she loved so much, as well as the whole Society of the Helpers which, wherever she passed, she made to be loved and admired!"

FINIS.